

When Life Is Tough - Part 6

Reasons For Confidence No Matter What

Romans 8:31-34

Well grab your Bibles this morning please pull them out right at the outset of this message and open them to Romans chapter 8. We are right in the middle of what is probably one of the most encouraging chapters in all of the Bible and I don't need to tell you that. I mean you've learned this if you've been in the church for any amount of time. We quote it, they write lyrics for songs about this. These are some of the most uplifting and heartening passages in all of the Bible. But what's important to remember when we talk about how encouraging these verses are is that they're set in the context of the guarantee that we will suffer. We often don't remember that but that what this whole passage has been about. Starting in verse 18 all the way through verse 39 I mean we're looking at the issues that relate to our suffering. And we're guaranteed to have many trials between now and the time we meet Christ face to face in which we'll have to groan our way through those but not as defeated people and not just surviving but according to the passage we've been equipped with several tools to help us thrive in the midst of our trials.

We've looked at how our mind set should be different, our perspective should be right, that we ought to defer to prayer, that even in prayer God's going to help us so that we are praying the right things even when our prayer list is all wrong. We looked at these chains and the links of God's plan for our salvation. He started it and he's going to finish it. We've seen issues that relate to our patience and our perseverance and our hope. Hopefully we've been encouraged so far, but now as we get to verse 31 through 34 he begins to speak to our emotions. Albeit you know some what veiled here is a statement of truth and a series of truths that speak to our hearts, particularly our temptation to feel insecure. Now, I know we don't like to think or admit that we would be insecure, but the symptoms of insecurity there ubiquitous and they're undeniable even among churchgoers especially when we go through trials. When we're called to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, it not always true for us that we fear no evil, we have episodes of anxiety and worry and we're deeply concerned and we have a lot of ways to veil it but our hearts are afraid. And you know what? According to a passage like this, these truths spelled out in these four verses really show us if we understand them and if they get to the center of our hearts we recognize there's no place for worry, anxiety or fear in the heart of a Christian. It makes no sense.

We should be able to march through the valley of the shadow of death or illness or financial problems or harassment or legal trouble or whatever it might be and fear no evil because God is with us. He's not just with us, look at the wording in verse number 31, he's for us. Take a look at this text, it's great. It says, "What shall we say then to these things?" Romans 8:31. All that we've looked at, all the things that God has promised us, the security we have in our relationship with God, the guarantee that he's going to get us to glorification and nothing is going to thwart his plan. What are we going to say to that? Well if God is for us, here's the rhetorical question, who can be against us? It's a funny rhetorical question because really in the context we find there's a lot of people against us. But it's a rhetorical question that says if God is for us, he is so big whatever is against you those are so small in comparison it really doesn't even compute it doesn't matter. It's kind of how we started this section that the suffering of this present time they're nothing compared to the glory that's going to be revealed to us. If our perspective can be on the end and our hope can be in God our enemies and our opposition looks a lot smaller. The trials the sufferings the problems they get smaller the bigger our God gets and if we recognize that that God has done everything in the scripture as it's spelled out relating to our salvation our adoption and our future glorification. He's done that all for us.

Take a look at the next verse. Verse 32, he who did not spare his own Son, talk about giving and sacrifice, I mean there's no bigger sacrifice than that. If God did not spare his own Son but he gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Whatever the

need might be if he gave the biggest thing you don't think he's going to provide the smaller things? Verse 33, speaking now with a lot of legal words popping up in this sentence. Who will bring a charge against God's elect? I mean if you're feeling insecure I mean come on? Who's going to bring a charge that's going to stick against God's elect because it's God who justifies. I mean he's really the only one who can bring any kind of charge that could stick. Who is to condemn? Well in the Bible it says Jesus is going to be the one representative of all humanity, the God-man will be the judge of the earth and he is not your judge, he is according to this text one who has died for you and more than that he was raised from the dead, he's at the right hand of God and he is indeed interceding for us. I mean the only one who can bring a charge and the only one that can condemn us now according to the Bible if we are his children, if Christ is our captain, if God the God of the Bible is our God, if our hope is in him he's on our side now. He's for us.

There's some great truths here and I would like to be honest about the issue of fear and anxiety and worry because these verses really leave us no room for that in our lives. And I hate for you or I to get to heaven and look back on our lives with embarrassment that we did not fully trust in a fully trustworthy God. Do you know what I'm saying? I kind of think a lot of us might feel like those apostles who were in the boat on the Sea of Galilee when the big storm hit. Do you remember that in Mark 4? They freaked out. If you want a Greek lesson there's your Greek lesson. I mean the word literally it means they were scared out of their minds. We get the phrase scared out of their wits from that narrative account in the Bible. They were just beside themselves with fear and they go to Jesus remember he's in the hull of the boat, he's sleeping, and they say, "Don't you care that we're going to die here? We're going to drown." And Jesus stands up and he says, "Why are you afraid? You of little faith." Where's your faith? I mean do you really think God's redemptive plan for the Messiah to redeem mankind is going to end in a boating accident on the Sea of Galilee, really? What are you afraid of? And out of frustration to get them to recognize that, to knock them in the forehead, he stands up rebukes the wind and the waves and it becomes calm. You can see Peter, right? Oh, I wasn't really all that afraid, you know. James going, "I knew we'd be alright. It'll be fine." See when you get to heaven and you meet the disciples don't bring up the storm on the Sea of Galilee. They probably don't want to talk about it because it was an embarrassing moment for them. They should have trusted that's what Jesus rebuked them for because Christ was in the boat and if Christ is in your boat it ain't going down, right? I mean it is something that you and I ought to take to heart. I don't want to be embarrassed looking back from heaven's perspective that I sat there and bit my fingernails as I walk through the valley of the shadow of death when the Bible says even if it ends in physical death I'm going to be okay. I don't want to worry.

There's no place for worry, anxiety or fear in your life and I know it's a respectable sin in 21st century Christianity. A lot of us say well it's got to be like a mom. It's mom's job to worry. It's not, worry is a sin. Do you realize that? We ought to see it like lust or adultery or any other sin. It is something we need to eradicate from our heart and the answer is right here because it says if God is for us, look again at verse number 31. What are we going to say in response to all this? If God is for us, who can be against us? Now again, context, what's the context? There are people against you? There's a lot of trouble out there. As a matter of fact drop down to verse 35, look at the list there when he goes on to now talk about specifically we'll deal with this next week Lord willing, the love of Christ who's going to separate us from the love of Christ? Then he lists some things. Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword and then he quotes the Old Testament text, "for it's written for your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, now underline this, in all these things we are more than conquerors. What's the point? Well, we're going to have tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger or sword. You're not exempt from that. It may happen to you. You may have a lot you may have a little but you're going to have some and if you have this trial here's the deal. You're a conqueror. Why, because the love of Christ, the plan of God, the security that you have in your relationship with God, makes all those things really small.

If God is for us, who can be against us? Well, lots of folks. As a matter of fact you picked up more enemies after you became a Christian than before you became a Christian, you realize that? You become now more opposed as you grow in your sanctification and become more Christ-like than when you weren't. Matter of fact I can say this, the more godly you are the more you have attracted the attention of the biggest and most powerful enemies in the universe. Is that not biblically true? What does the Bible say, 1 Peter chapter 5 says we have an adversary, the devil, he is our enemy, he prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour and guess who he sets his crosshairs on? He's looking for people, who are doing the most for Christ, who are looking more like Christ, who are attracted Christ so all you have to do is become a Christian and he was rather friendly toward you before, now he doesn't like you. And secondly you start becoming more like Christ he's going to oppose you even more. Well I don't go to séances and I don't even own a Ouija Board so it ain't going to happen to me. Listen you do understand, I know this trippy stuff for non-Christians and you can just think of golf or something else but those of us that are Christians we do understand that there is a real spiritual battle going on in this world.

What we are dealing with is not just what we see and though Satan uses things to oppose us he is behind so much of it. Job, case in point, do you know the book of Job? Turn there real quick just the first chapter or two. Job chapter 1 tells us about a battle going on because, thank you very much God, God points out that Job's pretty godly guy. I'm thinking don't say that about me. Please, let's just keep that quiet. No, no, no, God is putting Job up on a pedestal, look at this guy, he does what is right, he follows me and Satan goes, drop down to verse number 9, then Satan answered Yahweh and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason?" Interesting by the way when you have this phrase that kind of sums up godly Christianity certainly from a New Testament perspective or godliness in the Old Testament it's wrapped up under this word fear God. Because if you fear God here's the thing he's the only authority you care about you don't fear any other authority or any other opposition. Do you think Job was afraid to speak up for God and to speak up for what was right? No, because he feared God. If he feared God he was fearless about those things. If he was a man who feared God when it was time to do something that was risky he did it because he feared God. So here's a guy who's heart was settled before all the things of this earth and he said do you think he does that for nothing? Why I mean you kind of got a big hedge around his life. So they make a deal and you know how the story starts to unfold but let's look at some of the details of it in verse 14. Satan starts to unleash the opposition against Job and it says in verse 14 there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were feeding beside them, and the Sabeans", circle that word and put in the margin bad guys, "the Sabeans fell upon them took them struck down the servants with the edge of the sword and I alone", the messenger says, "have escaped to tell you."

You got bad guys taking Job's stuff. You ever have a bad guy take your stuff? You ever had your house broken into? How violated do you feel when that takes place? How about car, twice for me I got my car broken into. I mean it's a terrible feeling and you get angry. Not only that if it's in your house and they're rummaging through your drawers and they're stealing your jewelry and all that, is that not one of the most unsettling feelings? It takes your heart and it just puts it in a state of anxiety. Sabeans come and take the working tools of this man, he's a farmer, a man of agriculture and he takes his tractors and takes his stuff and kills his servants and that's an unsettling thing. Do you see how Satan's opposition is usually going to strike to the heart of our security? And this would unsettle Job's heart. So people if you want to make sub-points here what are some of your enemies that threaten? Well, you're going to have people that threaten you. People some how, lawsuits, opposition, thieves, criminals, whatever it might be.

Verse 16, while he was yet speaking, there came another that said, the fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them and I alone have escaped to tell you. Well, more economic loss for Job and this time it came "from the fire of God" which of course that's what the servant said but we know who was really behind this it was Satan's opposition to Job. Satan hated Job and he was trying to put him down. Number 2 or letter B if you're taking some sub-notes here's another way you're going to be attacked through things like natural disasters. And by the way what do those do to your heart? How about that little

earthquake wake up call earthquake we had last week? Did that shake you up a little bit? Now when I was a kid like my kids now and it's ridiculous now from my adult perspective but they love these things. Whoo, they come out of their bedrooms, we just put them in, that was great Dad, oh so cool. I'm downstairs we put the kids to bed and you know what I'm thinking, I'm thinking I don't have any earthquake insurance, oh God stop this, I see the cracks in the walls, I don't know if I hung that thing on a stud, please stop! I got real concerns, right? And I'm starting to think, stop, stop this because that's my house. That's where I live, it costs a lot of money to fix this stuff, plus I don't want a beam to fall down and kill us all. What's the point? Natural disasters when they hit that's an unsettling thing. That'll produce some anxiety, worry, concern in our hearts.

Verse 18, while he was yet speaking, there came another that said, your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and behold a great wind came across the wilderness and struck down the four corners of the house, it fell upon the young people, and they are dead and I alone have escaped to tell you. How about this one, letter C, death, talk about an enemy we have, death. I never forget the line from C.S. Lewis' book, "Grief Observed", he wrote it when his wife had died and he said, "I never realized how much grief feels like fear." If you've ever been through grief you know what it's like, it unsettles your heart. Things that you count on things that had, this relationship is gone, this person I love is gone, they've been taken from me. The death of your loved ones, that'll rock your world. Talk about fear, talk about timidity, talk about uncertainty, talk about that feeling of anxiety, that'll do it. One of Satan's favorite tools, he loves that.

Now round two, chapter 2, they have another little deal going on and in verse 7 of chapter 2 God allows in his providence Satan to go after the guy's health. Verse 7 so Satan went out from the presence of Yahweh and struck down Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head and now he's really sick. I won't even read you verse 8 it's so disgusting. Does sickness do that to you? It's funny how one night you can go to bed you're lying in bed and everything is cool and it's fine and you're not in great shape or all that but whatever it's cool. And the next day you go to the doctor they give you a diagnosis and they start looking at something on some sort of scan or something and they go it doesn't look right there. The next night you lay in bed and how do you feel? Your mind is like doing you know mental x-rays of your insides. Come on, I don't know man, this thing is messed up, I have cancer. What about that tumor? We can't help that. Illness unsettling, fear producing.

This is the worse one of all, verse 9, it really it, it's the most unsettling of all, verse 9, Job 2:9, and his wife said to him after all this, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." Good night, [kiss]. I mean you just see that conversation going on. That's awful, that's really awful because it's coming from your own wife, but it's really awful because it's as satanic as Genesis 3 when the tempter said to Adam and Eve, "Hey guys, God's keeping this from you. God is really not as good as you think he is. I know you thought he's good but he's not good, look at what he's doing to you. You ought to curse God and die." False teaching, what is that letter E. Think of the things that Satan will use to unsettle your heart. People, bad people, natural disasters, death, illness, false teaching that will come and bombard you from that guy at work or that book you read or that thing on TV and now all of a sudden I don't know maybe I don't know about God anymore, I don't know. And it'll unsettle your heart but put this down number 1 on your outline, when enemies threaten, you and I need to be fearless.

1. When Enemies Threaten, Be Fearless

Those things will come into your life, your sickness, the death of your loved ones, bad people, bad things and you and I need to be fearless because here's what the scripture says, let me say it to you again. If God is for you, who can be against you? All of those things including your own death according to 1 Corinthians 15 is an enemy that one day will be put under his feet and be defeated. We face death with a sense of victory, we face all of these, they're nothing more than I think of those air soft guns that my kids have and shoot me when I'm working in the garage, they think it's funny, but they actually hurt and leave little red marks. Now can you imagine if a whole

neighborhood breaks out in an air soft gun war? Now I'm getting tired of it so I walk out with a Tompson submachine gun. Who wants to be on my team? It's not fair. You're bringing a gun to a pillow fight if you've got God on your side because even death is nothing for God who speaks into existence things that don't exist. Who says to dead men like Lazarus, "Arise and come forth". God is going to defeat every enemy that harasses us and gives us trouble or pain or some kind of problem or frustration in life. You're going to win in the end. It's like that scene in Indiana Jones there, Raiders of the Lost Ark, when the guy with the Arabian swords comes out and there's this show down and circles around like a junior high fight and everybody's there and he's whoop whoop whoop, remember that scene? What does Indiana Jones do? Bang! I mean if you've got the firepower and they don't you're in a power position. I mean don't make me quote Dirty Harry now, right? 44 magnum most powerful handgun in the world, blow your head clean off. Do you remember that scene? He's on the ground there after the robbery. So do you feel lucky? So do you punk? That's the best line. Well, you're kind of in a power position with the big, you know, with the big 44 magnum stainless steel barrel pointed at his nose. This is no fight here, it's not fair. If God is for you then when sickness, bad people, lawsuits, disease, death comes your way, all of those are really small if you would start to understand how big your God is and how for you this God is if indeed Christ is your captain and the God of the Bible is your God.

By the way, go to the end of the book if you would, the last chapter in Job, Job 42, because all of these bad things are not outside the purview and oversight of a powerful, sovereign God. And that really is the message that Job needs to learn. I know he says some good things in response to his wife like you're a foolish woman and speak as one of the foolish. And he praise God shall we except good from the hand of God and not evil. And all that looks good but he starts to doubt the goodness of God as the whole book unfolds and if you haven't studied Job he kind of winds himself into a place where he's frustrated at God and he wants a hearing with God and he's got a few things to get off his chest with God. So God pops on the scene after these 3 friends and later the fourth friend steps in and here God says, "You sit down and let me talk." Here we go. And he gives him three chapters of a lecture about how powerful he is. As though any of this were out of God's control.

Look at Job's response, verse 1 Job 42. I mean if you want the perspective and it sounds a lot like the book of Romans here it comes. And Job answered the LORD and said: "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted." Do you understand that understanding the sovereignty of God is one of the most important things you can do to put your heart at rest. Even when bad things happen to you. You want to walk through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil as David wrote in Psalm 23, than you better understand the power of the Shepard. That he is walking you down a path that he has chosen for you and the bad stuff that happens to you is no big deal to him. I know that you can do all things no purpose of yours can be thwarted. And if you want a homework assignment, how about Psalm 112? I won't take time to turn you there but what a great Psalm about godly people being able to not be afraid at bad news because our hearts are firm, we trust in the Lord, our hearts are steady, what a great Psalm. You study it on your own.

Back to our passage, Romans chapter 8, not only will you have enemies but they're no enemies compared to the greatness of a God who is for us. But you're going to have some needs because some of these bad things are going to happen to you and you're going to say, "Well what are we going to do now?" Verse 32 reminds us that God who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him graciously give us all things because you may say, "Well, here's the problem Mike, my husband did get sick and he died and now I'm a widow, now I have no idea what's going to happen." I've got some real needs here. Here's the deal, if God was willing to meet your ultimate need by sending his own son at the greatest cost anyone could ever imagine, to solve that problem for you. Do you think your problem of money, or your problem of where to live, or your problem of a job is any real big deal to him? Do you think God is not going to respond in his time for your good at the right place? Don't you think God is going to meet that need that's the promise here? He's going to meet your need. Won't he graciously give us all things, maybe not all that you want but certainly all that you need and even cross reference 2

Corinthians 12 when he doesn't pull the thorn out of your flesh and the pain stays in place he says my grace is sufficient for you. I will give you grace, find yourself a new widow, hey God will give you grace. You buried a kid like Job did, hey God will give you grace. He will sustain you through this you will never be like the Israelites and the ancient near easterners that use to tear their clothes and mess up their hair. You know there was one group in Israel that were never allowed to do that. Who were they? Priests, priests couldn't do that. It was against the rules for the priests to tear their clothes. A sign of abject frustration and grieving and they couldn't mess up their hairs they couldn't put dirt in their hair and do that. The ancient sign of despair couldn't have that because you and God are supposed to be tight. Of all people you should know if God is for us, who can be against us. And if God is going to supply for our sin problem certainly he'll supply for everything else. Never reaching the place of despair, I love that. We are priests in this kingdom, you understand that. We are a kingdom of priests which means we never despair. Never. Do we grieve, yes there are things that hurt but we don't grieve as the rest of the world grieves because they don't have any hope. And our hope is that God is going to turn this upside down world right side up so you and I number 2 when needs arise, put it down this way, we need to be confident.

2. When Needs Arise, Be Confident

When needs arise, and they will, you and I need to be confident because worrying is not allowed, you can't do it. It is not for you to wonder or be uncertain, it is for you to be certain and confident. Let me give you the words of Jesus here, Matthew chapter 6 Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapter 6 Jesus got a lot to say about our temptations to anxiety and uncertainty and fear and worry. He'll have nothing of it. By the way as you turn to Matthew chapter 6 we're about to take another group from Compass to that sight where he preaches on the hillside overlooking this beautiful and most days we go placid lake, the Sea of Galilee and people often have the wrong idea of what's going on. They picture Jesus there with the perfectly manicured beard and his fingernails are clean and there's a butterfly on his shoulder and birds are flipping around and kids are playing but they're all getting along. Everything is great and all the people are dressed in really clean robes as they're walking around with sandals that are perfectly, you know that got all the saddle soap on them just every thing is wonderful. He's preaching these wonderful words, these great words, oh blessed are the meek and it's just so idyllic. It's not idyllic. Christ is about to get crucified by Roman soldiers. The people that he's preaching to in Matthew chapter 6 are already under the heavy hand, the iron fist of Rome. They're taxing them exorbitant taxes, they're abusing the people and Titus would be sent from Rome not to many years from this particular sermon and would sweep through Palestine, would kill many of these Jewish people, he would ransack the city of Jerusalem, break down the walls, they would desecrate the temple and topple every stone on Herod's temple would be toppled down to the ground and they would be killed or subjected and conscripted as slaves and deported back to Rome to build edifices like the Coliseum that we now go visit on vacations. That was the future of these people and Jesus has got some things to say. Don't picture the butterfly with the nicely manicured European high cheek boned Jesus. That's not what's going on here. Verse 25, therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, this is not defeatism, it's like it's not going to work out just forget it. No, don't be anxious what you're going to eat or what you're going to drink or about your body what you'll put on because is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? I mean those are such minor things. Look at the birds of the air they neither sow nor reap nor gather in barns and yet your heavenly Father feeds them, your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more value than they? And which of you by the way, here's a great Orange County Mom verse, and which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life, or you can add or your kid's span of life. You can't do it. Worrying is useless. God all the days that are written in the book, Psalm 139, for your kid's life already written. Your kid is immortal until the day God has chosen for your kid to die or you to die. Worrying is not going to help. So why are you anxious about clothing, verse 28, by the way consider the lilies of the field they don't grow, they don't toil, they don't spin and yet I tell you even Solomon with all of his glorious regalia of the king, the golden age Old Testament Israel at the very best when gold was just everywhere he said he wasn't arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into

the oven will he not much more clothe you, O you of little, there's the slap again in the face. We don't trust him. How embarrassing for us to worry because you're 401K tanked. Isn't that going to be embarrassing for us that we're going to sweat out the next few years thinking maybe we're going to be, I don't know, living under and underpass somewhere? God is going to take care of his kids. Therefore don't be anxious, verse 31, as though we didn't get the message, saying "What are we going to eat?" "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the Gentiles, now notice you're suppose to be different then the Gentiles here, the Gentiles seek after all these things. Which is his ethnic way of saying the people that don't trust in God, the Gentiles seek after all these things and your heavenly Father, guess what? He knows that you need them all. Does he know what you need? Does he know that when you retire you're going to need some money? Does he know that you need a house because your house went into foreclosure? Does he know that your kids need some money to go to school? He knows all of that. Does he know that you need what you need, he's got it all in his head, he knows it, but what does he want you to focus on? Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and then all these other things I'll take care of those. I'll add them to you. Could you get your focus on stuff that matters to me eternally and stop worrying about the temporal things in life?

And I love the way he keeps saying heavenly Father, heavenly Father, heavenly Father. And it's so good because he always puts us in the position of child, young child, little kid. There's one thing about my little kids that I recognize. Like when I whistle for them to get in the van because we're going somewhere they never scurry for their wallets, I've noticed that. They just dar dar dar dar dar. They don't care where they're going, they figure Dad must have money, right? It's going to work out. They don't worry about that stuff. They never get in the car, never had one lean forward from the back seat say, "Hey, Dad how are we doing on gas? Do we have enough to get where we're going?" Never. Never had my daughter go to the glove box and say, "Is our proof of insurance in here? Are we okay? Are we paid up? Deductibles are they where they need to be?" No they don't worry about any of that. Matter of fact I don't want them to worry about that. Do you know what I want them to worry about? I want them to worry about, can you bring your homework with you please because as we drive I want you to work on things that matter as it relates to my agenda. I don't want you to worry about gas, I don't want you to worry about insurance, I don't want you to worry about money when we get to where we're going, can you work though on your little math table there? That would be important to me. You know God's got the same thing going on while you're trying to rummage through the glove box to see if you've got enough when you retire. He would like you to trust him for those things and this is the word from God not from me, seek first the kingdom God and his righteousness and then all the other things you need he'll take care of that. Is this a call to irresponsibility? No, of course not, it's a call for you never to worry though and stop with this, it's not worry I'm just concerned, you know, enough with the word games. Enough with the word games. If this burdens your heart, here's a word merizomai, is the word that we just read multiple times in Matthew 6. Merizomai is the word translated anxiety or anxious and it's the word that your mind is bifurcated, it's torn and it keeps kind of like a ping pong it's a little schizophrenic, it's always thinking about all these things and worrying about all this stuff. Your mind is split. He says don't have your mind split have it focused. Seek first the kingdom, get your focus where it needs to be. Don't worry.

You're going to have needs in your future absolutely. What I don't want you doing and what God doesn't want you doing is worrying about them because if he gave his son to fix your ultimate problem whatever problems arise he'll fix them. He will take care of them. I've already quoted 2 Corinthians chapter 12 but don't forget it. If he doesn't take the pain away he will give you the grace to not only endure it but to thrive in it. And when we thrive in it maybe like Paul we can then say I'm content with the weakness and I'm content with the insults, I'm content with the hardships, the persecution because when I'm weak I'm strong.

When enemies threaten you need to be fearless because God is for us. When needs arise you need to be confident because he's going to graciously give us all that we need. Lastly verses 33 and 34 of Romans chapter 8. I know there's a lot of a mental gymnastics we go through as it relates to our standing with God and he hones right in on it with legal language. Who's going to

bring a charge against God's elect? It's God who justifies, he's got the gavel in his hand. Who's the one to condemn? Who's going to assign and sentence people to a place of punishment? Well it's Christ Jesus he's the one but he died for us and more than that he was raised he's at the right hand God now he's our lawyer. He's interceding for us. I mean the one that could be the one we should worry about as Jesus said, "Don't worry about the one who can kill the body." And after that they can't do anything. Worry about the one who can kill the body and then cast your soul into hell. Worry about that one. Then he turns around and says, "Hey, you can make peace with him." As a matter of fact he can become not your hostile enemy. We were all born at enmity with God. He can now become your advocate and if you're not in trouble with him then you're not in trouble. If God has cleared you then you're clear and therefore when the charges come in my mind and I start feeling uncertain about my relationship with God and I think to myself, how can I be a part of this thing called Christianity, how can I be forgiven, how can I say I'm going to heaven, and it happens especially when you step up to do something for God. Am I right? You're going to step up and share the gospel with your co-worker and you go and you do it. It's that day isn't it? Satan seems to push you down the spiritual staircase and you smack your chin on the bottom and it's like oh man look at me. And he gets you in front of the mirror and says you're going to speak up for Christ, really, you? Huh, you're such a loser. When the condemnation comes, and I put this in a spiritual setting, because Satan this is his forte, you do understand that's where he gets his name. The Hebrew word Saton that is translated into English Satan we just transliterate it into English Satan, Saton means accuser. Matters of fact let me have you look at this passage I know I've done it in the past but look at it again. Zachariah chapter 3. If that sounds hard to find, well it kind of is, but you can find it. Go to Matthew and start turning back and you'll find it. What a great text to remind us that the one who can condemn us is the one who makes us right. Verse 1, Zachariah 3, then he showed me Joshua the high priest. That's not Joshua the sidekick of Moses. This is a different Joshua; he's a thousand years after the other Joshua. We're pushing 400 BC at this point after the reassembling of Israel after the Babylonian captivity. He showed me in this vision, Joshua the high priest, now the high priest is suppose to be a holy guy, he's one of the holy representatives of the people. He's standing before the angel of the lord and Satan. Now what does Saton mean in Hebrew? Accuser. Standing at his right hand to accuse him. That's not a surprise. The liar shows up to lie or the golfer shows up to golf or the accuser shows up to accuse and he does. And the Lord said to Satan, the Lord rebuke you O Satan. The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. Is this and he beats him to the punch, he's accusing him but he goes okay I'm with you on that, is this not a brand plucked from the fire?

Now if you're looking for to Christ to defend you by saying, "hey, no he's pretty good." That's not what he's going to say. When you feel guilty it's because you are guilty and Jesus isn't playing word games with that. Oh, this is a brand and I know this is the best Israel has to offer, I know he's a brand plucked from the fire. But he's going to solve the problem. Now Joshua is standing there before the angel and he was clothed in filthy garments, that's a picture of his sin, he's not perfect. And the angels said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him" and he said, "Behold I have taken your iniquity away from you and I will cloth you with pure vestments." There it is there's that picture of acceptability before God. And I said let them put a clean turban on his head. So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments and the angel of the Lord was standing by. And the angel of the Lord solemnly assured Joshua. And he goes on. I love that. Why? Did he say, "Aww, you're not so bad. Ehh, It's not as dirty as most people." That's not how God responds. God responds this way, you are guilty but here's the deal I've solved the problem for you and that's critically important.

Let's talk about this, let's talk about your golf game. How bad is that? Is that pretty bad? Have you tried it? Looks easy, looks boring on TV I know but it's very hard. So we have these tournaments that kind of help us out a little bit. At tournaments we do one of two things usually we either do a scramble or a best ball. And both make the game a lot more tolerable. A scramble, you guys who were at our Focal Point tournament that's how we play at the Focal Point tournament, 4 guys they pair up or 4 gals or whatever any mix there of and we hit the ball off the tee and we find where the best one is. We like this one. That one is in the bush. That one's in the fairway. That one's in the fringe. We'll take that one. Okay, everyone bring their ball over here then we hit the next one,

then we get a much better score that way as you can imagine, right? Well there's another way to play it, it's called Best Ball. A lot of people think best ball is scramble but it's not. Best ball is this. Four guys get on the tee, 4 people, you tee off and then you take whatever shot you got. Everybody takes their own ball and they play it all the way till they putt out and put it in the hole. What goes on the score card, trying to create a team score here? Well you put the best score of the four on the score card. So let's say it's a par 3 and I shank one into the bushes which is not hard to imagine. And what do you do? You got to tee it up, one in the bush, two to drop, three to hit, so I'm hitting three and I shank the other one into the lake, three in the lake, four to drop so I end up with a 14 on the par 3. And you get up and you're laughing but you hit a 16, that's really bad, and then you, you're pretty good so you hit a 5, double bogey, which is not really that good but we got a fourth player, the fourth player, ace, hole in one. Have you ever seen one of those? Get really excited about those. But you don't get so excited about this one because this guy every time he steps up gets a hole in one even on the par fives. It's amazing, crazy. Do you know what his score is, his average score on 18 holes? 18 Amazing so when you go to the tournament you what him on your team, because here's the deal, it doesn't matter how bad you play you got a double bogey, I got infinity bogey and we're absolutely terrible golfers and that guys pretty good and that guy he probably would've had kept his own score, he would have had a decent score and I would have a bad score, you would have had a terrible score but the bottom line is this, our score card reads 18.

To be clothed in Christ is to have the relationship with God as though we did everything perfectly. It's as though hole number one is resisting temptation as a teenager, let's just talk about that one. How did you do? Double bogey. I don't know what ever your score was, some of you are still looking for lost balls on that one, I don't know. But guess what Jesus did as a teenager? Hole in one, aced it. And then about when he was there in situations that were pressure and the godly thing would be to speak up and say something for God's honor. How have you done on those throughout your adult life? Not so good. Well, he did it perfectly every time. There are times when you should get angry in righteous anger and should stand up with zeal for God's word. Every time it was right to do that, which is not very often, Jesus did it perfectly right. Ace. When we should shut up and not say anything even though we're angry and you should really bite your lip, you know, how have you done on that one? Well not really good at all. Well, Jesus did that hole too and he aced that one too. Now here's the thing, if you're playing best ball all of those apply to your score. Your score card has an A on it and they hand you the trophy in the club house. Yeah, 18, Mike Fabarez you got an 18, that's great, it's perfect. Welcome to the celestial clubhouse you're in. Now there's somebody there on my way to the club house who keeps going, "You're a loser man. I saw the fourth hole. I don't know how many times you went into the bushes there it's terrible. You're a lousy golfer." Here's what you say, you say what Jesus would say and that is, "Yeah, I know". That's what you say, "Yeah, I know but Jesus did it perfectly and his life has been imputed to me."

One passage on this, how about 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Sunday school grads say that's the resurrection chapter, but he's saying something about the privilege of preaching about the resurrection and seeing the resurrected Christ and he says this in verse number 9. 1 Corinthians 15:9, to be an apostle, to represent the risen Christ to have seen him and testified to it that is an amazing privilege and he says for I am the least of the apostles. Unworthy to be called and apostle because I persecuted the church of God. Now do you think that's a guilty feeling to look back on your life and know that you killed Christians? That feels bad and you know what Satan is there to remind you of that I'm sure often, right? You should not be an apostle; you shouldn't even be a Christian. Apply this to Christianity there are things Satan will point to in your life and say you have no right to speak up for Christ, you have no right to think you're going to heaven, you have no right to think God loves you. Look at these things in your life. Verse 10, here should be your life verse right here, but by the grace of God I am what I am. That isn't a Popeye line. This is one of the most important theological truths you could ever capture in your heart. When Satan shows up and says you have no right thinking you're loved by God you should say you're right, I am unworthy but by the grace of God I am what I am. I'm loved and excepted and on the winning

team and I am someone who because the one who could condemn me has embraced me because the one who could judge me is the one defending me before the holy tribunal of God.

By the grace of God I am what I am and I know a lot of you think that little scenario you gave me if I had, you know, hole-in-one king on my team I wouldn't even bother teeing it up. That's not how grace works that may work that way logically in that illustration but just like the apostle Paul here's what grace does. Look what he says next line, and his grace toward me was not in vain on the contrary I worked harder than any of them though it wasn't I but the grace of God that is in me. Do you see how that works? Grace does not allow me to then go out and just say hey I'm not even going to worry about living godly. Hit them in the bushes in the lake it doesn't matter. No, it does matter. I'm on the winning team right now and the grace of God will motivate me to not only try to hit them straight but the grace of God in me is going to enable me to hit them straight more often than I did before. And the grace of God is going to move me forward to be the best I can be in this world and when I trip and I fall and Satan shows up to accuse me because that's his job, I can point back to the scripture and say who's going to bring a charge against God's elect? Well, Satan will bring several but he's really nothing because it's God who ultimately justifies. Who is it to condemn? Well that's Jesus Christ, he's been given all authority to judge but he's the one who died for me, more than that he is right now behind the bench with me as my advocate, he's interceding for me as he stands before God, at the right hand of God interceding for us.

3. When Reminded Of Your Guilt, Be Bold

Let me give you the third point, when reminded of your guilt, be bold. Don't be uncertain, don't waver, don't fret be bold. You are dressed in Christ. Christ is on your team. You will have enemies that threaten, you will have needs that arise, you will be reminded of your guilt that is all probably going to happen this week. Every time fearless confident and bold that's the biblical picture. Proverbs 27:1 says the wicked flee when no one pursues them but the righteous are as bold as a lion. Paul use to rebuke Timothy because you're just too timid. The disciples are embarrassed that they had Christ in their boat and yet they were afraid. Can we remember that we have Christ in the boat? He's in your life, isn't he? Then what are you afraid of? Here's some guys that remember that Christ was in their boat, how about David standing before Goliath? That was not a fair fight was it. I mean that should really invoke in your heart David what it invoked in the hearts of all the other people that were frozen with fear in that valley. And yet he said, who is this uncircumcised Philistine that taunts the armies of the living God, let me at him. You come against me with swords and spears. I come against you in the name of the Lord whose armies you have defied. Or how about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego or forget those Babylonian names. Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael those three guys, who stood before the monarch, the dictator of Babylon who said bow down to this idol or I'm going to throw you in this furnace. And they said hey, I don't care if you throw us into the furnace because our God is able to deliver us from your hand, this is Daniel 3. But even if he doesn't, if he chooses in his providential plan to burn us as a barbeque this afternoon because we're not bowing down to you we don't even care. We're not bowing down to your idol. And it's funny how quickly we can fold. Like Peter in a court yard when someone says you're with Christ aren't you. No I'm not. Start cursing to prove because he's embarrassed and he's afraid of what might happen. The disciples had nothing to worry about; you have nothing to worry about. Can we eradicate by God's grace, fear anxiety and worry from our lives because we have a God who is for us, a God who graciously promised to provide for us and a God who's relationship is secure because the only one that could mess it up is the one who's made is secure. Jesus Christ. Let's pray. Stand with me as we pray.

God, we stand before you wanting first of all, at least I do and I hope many hearts would join with me in this prayer, saying that we're very sorry for episodes in our lives maybe as recent as today or this week where we have been afraid, we've been worried, we fret, we get anxious. Let us not make that some kind of respectable sin by calling it something else. Let us recognize that when our hearts are unsettled and they're not at peace then something is wrong. We're not trusting fully in a fully trustworthy God. There's things that hurt, there's going to be pain, there will be grief, there will be trials, but our hearts should be a whole lot more like David and Hananiah, Azariah

and Mishael and a whole lot less like the disciples who all they could see was the storm and they did not remember that Christ was in their boat. Give us God that sense that's just riveted deep into our hearts that if you are for us then all these people lined up against us are nothing and we don't really care. We're not afraid. When it comes to our needs and we find problems because our house is been foreclosed on our jobs have laid us off or our spouse has just been buried or whatever the real trauma of our life that tempts us to fear because we may not have the provisions that we need, lost retirement fund, whatever it might be may we stop with our fretting and worrying. Looking back to the words of Christ, if you take care of the birds and the flowers of the field you'll take care of us. What you want us to work on is our homework to seek first the kingdom and your righteousness. Let us remember that if God you gave your son for us there's no need, no provision that you'll withhold from us, not one that is best that you think that we need. We may not get everything we want but you certainly provide all the grace all the provision everything for life and godliness. And God most importantly let us never doubt our salvation if indeed our hope and trust are in Christ. I didn't do anything to merit salvation and my sin next Tuesday is not going to somehow disqualify me from it. I want to work hard, all the harder the more I recognize the virtues of grace but I certainly don't want in any way to doubt the fact that the one who could condemn me is the one who's chosen to save me. What a place of security, we can do so much more in this world if we are in fact secure in our hearts. No fear, unafraid, courageous, bold. So I pray you'd put that in our hearts. What a church could do filled with thousands of people that are unafraid; we could turn this world upside down. The fear of man is a snare, we know that, it traps us it keeps us from godly living so we want to get it out of our minds out of our hearts the fear of Satan and all that he can do if can be equally a snare it can be a bigger snare and we want to avoid that one as well and not afraid even of death itself. So give us courageous faith, kind of a resolve that makes a difference in the way we live, let us look back on this sermon, God, as a turning point maybe the turbo boost that we need to move from timidity to boldness in all the areas of our lives that need it. I don't want to be presumptuous God but we would like to be confident in you, trusting you fully, because we know you are fully trustworthy. We commit ourselves to you afresh, thanks for this day, Thanks for Dads, thanks here for Father's Day we appreciate the chance to celebrate that. In Jesus name, Amen.