

# Romans 8:36-39

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/rom/rom-8/romans-836-39/>

*Paul is nailing this point down, that because of the love of God, a love that is shown to us through Jesus's death on the cross, we as believers cannot be separated from that love.*

As Paul has made clear, nothing we can do and nothing we can experience will separate us from the amazing, infinite love of Jesus, including our own failures. The competing Jewish “authorities” are trying to use the threat of rejection (condemnation) to pressure the Roman believers to follow them. Paul argues “You don’t need their affection—if you understand the affection Jesus has for you, their love pales to nothing.”

If they follow Paul, that would mean the Roman believers would experience the suffering of rejection by the competing Jewish “authorities,” and rejection is painful to experience. But Paul is urging them to adopt a perspective that will cause them to realize that their true best interest lies in rejecting the false teaching of these competing Jewish “authorities.”

Even if we make choices following the flesh, which reap the consequences of death (disconnection, despair), condemnation (we bring on ourselves), and slavery/addiction, Jesus is for us. But Paul does not want us to endure self-inflicted suffering. We have been given resurrection power to walk in the newness of life daily, which continues to deliver us from the power of sin when we choose to walk according to the Spirit.

There is however a suffering of a completely different sort we will endure if we walk in righteousness and follow the path of obedience Jesus staked out for us. We will suffer rejection from the world. Or, as in this case, rejection from religious leaders who have embraced false teaching. This is to be expected, Paul says, and Paul uses a quote from Psalms to prove that it has always been this way for the people of God.

In verse 36, Paul refers to Psalm 44:22, which is about the affliction that God’s people were facing at that time:

*Just as it is written, “For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered” (v 36).*

Chapter 44 of Psalms talks about all sorts of suffering that God’s people went through, including being sold into slavery—and even death. Paul is bringing up this passage to remind believers of the affliction and pain that they will face if they walk in obedience. However, Paul asserts that when we remain faithful, we win:

*But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us (v 37).*

The word that is translated *overwhelmingly conquer* is the Greek word “hypernikao.” The prefix “hyper” is rendered *overwhelmingly* and “nikao” is rendered *conquer*. The same Greek word

“nikao” is translated as “overcomer” in Revelation 1-3, including in this verse that speaks of the great reward we have if we “overcome”:

“He who overcomes (‘nikao’), I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame (‘nikao’) and sat down with My Father on His throne.”  
(Revelation 3:21)

We are *conquerors* (nikao) when through Jesus, *Him who loved us*, we live and walk in obedience.

We are also *conquerors* over being separated from God, because of what Jesus did for us, because no affliction or tribulation can separate us from God's love. God wants to give us “all things.” This includes eternal life for those who believe (John 3:14-15) as well as the reward of the inheritance of Jesus, *if we suffer rejection from the world*, as He suffered (Romans 8:17b).

Paul runs through an extensive list of all sorts of extremes that are unable to separate us from the love of God: *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord* (vv 38–39).

The list ends with the all-inclusive *nor any created thing*. His point is that no matter what you put on the list, it is not powerful enough to separate believers (those who have placed their faith in Jesus and His sacrifice) from the love of God. There is absolutely nothing we can do to cause God to reject us. We are accepted by Him unconditionally. We cannot be separated from Jesus's love by:

- *Death*—death is separation. We can be separated from many things, but not from God's love. We are always His children because He gives unconditional belonging in His family to those who believe.
- *Life*—We might begin to imagine that we are living independent of God, that we don't really need Him, like the church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:17). But notwithstanding, God still loves us, even when we live an illusion (Revelation 3:19).
- *Angels nor principalities*—There are no spiritual forces that can separate us from God's love.
- *Things present, nor things to come*—Nothing in the present can separate us from God's love, and nothing in the future can separate us from God's love.
- *Powers*—No power on earth or in heaven can separate us from God's love.
- *Height nor depth*—This likely is metaphorically including all things in all spaces in all dimensions, that together with *nor any other created thing* provides an all-inclusive, exhaustive list of all that is; and none of it can separate us from God's love.

Paul ends Chapter 8 in the same way that he began it, by stating clearly that there is no condemnation for believers before God. That nothing, not the law, not the Jewish “authorities” who made slanderous claims against Paul (Romans 3:8), not death, not our sinful actions, nothing can separate us from God and His infinite love for us And this is irrespective of our

actions or choices. We can harm ourselves and others with bad choices. We can lose opportunities for benefits from bad choices. But nothing we can do will make God stop loving and seeking the best for His children, those who have believed in His name.

Chapters 1–7 have been building up to this point. Paul was proving why the slanderous claims from the Jewish “authorities” (3:8) are dead wrong; they claimed Paul was saying that if God’s grace increases when we sin then we should sin more so we can increase God’s grace. This is profoundly incorrect.

These “authorities” were arguing that believers are still under the law, and obedience to the law was necessary to attain righteousness. In Chapter 8, Paul tells his audience that the condemnation of the law (which he laid out in Chapter 7) is no longer applicable for believers because of their faith in Jesus and the power of the Spirit.

Chapter 8, from beginning to end, makes it clear that believers are now empowered to walk in the life-giving Spirit and not under condemnation from anything whatsoever. We, believers, cannot be separated from the love of God by anything, ever.

With respect to the objections raised by the competing Jewish “authorities,” Paul has now comprehensively demonstrated the theme verse of Romans 1:16–17, that the power of salvation creates righteousness in the presence of God by faith, when we first believe, and the power of salvation creates a lived experience of righteousness (living in harmony with God’s good design) in our daily lives when we walk in faith by the power of the Spirit. So, righteousness does indeed come by faith, from first to last.

## **Biblical Text**

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**“For Your sake we are being put to death all day long;  
We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”**

**37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**