**Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost**

**Sermon**

**Text:** Romans 8:35-39

**Theme:** Nothing stands in God’s way!

 What is standing in your way? What is stopping you today from having a full, happy, good and normal life! Well! I would think it is safe to say that the majority of us would say this crazy virus! Yes, and all its restrictions….first the lock down, then the economic consequences, now the mask mandate, sporting events being canceled or played without fans present, questions on how to open schools, and the list can go on and on. It feels like we are up against a brick wall. How do we break through it? The answer to this question is not found it us but in our God. He is the one who will do it. He is the answer, because **nothing can stand in his way!**

 Last Sunday we heard about God’s undeserved love for us! He wants us to be his! How he will work all thing for that good purpose. Now, before the words of our text for today Paul gives us a very powerful message that adds even more weight to what we heard last Sunday! List to what he says; **What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.**

 God didn’t spare His own Son. He gave him up for us. For the entire world. What love! What grace! What mercy! That love and commitment, show us that now there is no charge that is going to stick against us. We are forgiven.

Those are the wonderful and amazing facts of our salvation. ***God’s care for us. And there is nothing that will stand in his way.*** We will now hear in our text this truth! **Nothing can separate a believer from the love of Christ.**

Paul now gives us some very hands on practical examples of what stands in our way! **35What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?**

 The world’s values, entertainments, sins and difficulties are what the devil uses to get in our way! He wants us to throw up our hands. I surrender! I give in. He wants us to give up on our calling…our destiny. This is were we can doubt and even question. God has given up on me? Has he had enough and is ready to kick me to the curb? I struggle with that sin I commit all the time. I know it is wrong. I confess it. I don’t want to do it. But I keep falling in to it. Perhaps God has had enough the devil says! It’s like God is thinking: “Oh, my ! There he goes again! Haven’t I told him often enough not to do those things? What am I going to do with this one?” So, I wonder, am I being punished? Has forgotten about me.

 Sound familiar? I mean, look at all the troubles you’re having. You don’t have enough money. You are being restricted! Your rights have been taken from you! Your health–well, it’s one thing after another. Life is a mess. And you think: “Maybe God has deserted me, too. He doesn’t seem to care. Nothing is changing for the better. I mean, come on!” That is the devil talking.

 Now, listen again to God! **35What will separate us from the love of Christ?—Nothing can!** Like a mountain climber ascending a dangerous cliff behind his guide, secured only by a rope, the Christian goes through life secured. Anchored by the strong, unbreakable cable of God’s love. Because the way is treacherous, because of our sinful nature, because of the devil’s constant attacks, any believer may slip and fall. We, however, are secure! We are tied to God by a gracious, unchanging, eternal, and indestructible love. There is no ground on which to accuse us. And no one can condemn us. We are in Christ’s love!

 So, he Paul says: “Is anything left?” Is there anything at all that *“can separate us from the love of Christ?”* **Will trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36Just as it is written: For your sake we are being put to death all day long. We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.37**  Paul does not pull any punches. He tells it like its is. This world we live in is bad. It is full of bad things and we Christians are not immune. We may very well be subject to the calamities he mentioned. We may suffer. As the Paul quotes from Psalm 44:22, which expresses the distress of those who are subject to losing their life for their faith. The Psalmist was obviously familiar with such treatment, and Christians of Paul’s This is what we are experiencing in our day to:

* **Distress--**Life has been hard.
* **Persecution—**Are you a Christian? You must be a bigot then!
* **Famine—**Yes, people can and do go without food even amongst us!
* **Nakedness--** Today this word usually implies the state of undress normally associated with sexual activity or pornography. But in Paul’s day it had to do more with poverty so severe that the person so afflicted was unable to buy the clothes he or she needed. It is a corresponding term to famine and, like it, may refer to economic hard times deriving from natural disasters.
* **Danger or Sword—**Do you feel safe? It is hard when report come of thieves operating in our area

 Take this list of woes and apply it to yourself. Health problems? Financial problems? Family problems. The loss of a job? You yourself not living up to what you had hoped. The list could go on and on. It feels like we are swimming upstream. The media, education, government, all turning against the church. The great falling-away from faith in our society. And the virus! Yes, that seems to bring all them together.

If you look at the last two verses of our text, they may at first seem complicated. **38For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things to come, nor powerful forces, 39neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

But Paul is actually saying one thing. That one thing is this: “**I am convinced that nothing can separate us from the love of God**.” Everything else is additional amplification. Everything else simply embellishes that truth.

 **“For I am convinced.**” They speak of Paul’s personal conviction. He knew it to be true. He personally lived it and experienced every one of these trials.

There are times when someone will say to us, “I have heard everything you have said. Now just tell me how that applies to me? I don’t see it or feel it.

 Look at Jesus! Look to him. The reason Paul can say that nothing will separate us from the love of Christ is because Christ is alive and is still loving us now. He is at the right hand of God and is therefore ruling for us. And he is interceding for us, which means he is seeing to it that his finished work of redemption does in fact save us, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day to bring us safely to eternal joy. His love is not in the past. It is a very real and active. Powerful and alive. The living Son of God loves us, and will bring us to everlasting joy.

AMEN