

THE "IN SPITE OF" LIFE

(Romans 8:31-39)

I. In spite of calamity.

- a. Notice Romans 8:35.
 - i. There are some terrible things mentioned in this verse.
 - ii. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword.
 - iii. None of those things are situations we want to face.
- b. The brethren in Rome were being warned that those things may come.
- c. But the beginning of that verse is extremely important.
 - i. We would call that a rhetorical question.
 - ii. There is nothing that will separate us from the love of Christ.
- d. Read verses 37-39.
- e. Paul says that we are more than conquerors.
 - i. "We are more than conquerors" is one word in the Greek.
 - ii. It's the only time it is used in the New Testament and means to gain a surpassing victory.
 - iii. One version of the New Testament states, "Overwhelming victory is ours through Him that loved us".
- f. We know there are calamities or tragedies all the time.
 - i. School shootings, church shootings, accidents, murders, and so many other things.
 - ii. It may be that we feel as if God doesn't care.
 - iii. None of those things separate us from God's love.
- g. In spite of those terrible situations, we can still live the abundant life if we live in Christ.

II. In spite of conflicts.

- a. Notice Romans 8:31.
- b. While this is also a rhetorical question, we know there are answers to it.
 - i. It seems many in our society are against us.
 - ii. We know we have an adversary who is against us and he has many working for him in this world (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).
 - iii. The world is against us.
 - iv. Our own family members can be against us.
- c. There are times when our own brethren may be against us.
- d. We have to remember in those moments, what Elijah didn't remember: God is with us.
 - i. There was a terrible conflict going on between Elijah and Jezebel.
 - ii. Elijah just wanted to die because he felt all alone.

- iii. God had to remind him that he was not alone because God was with him and that there were others about whom Elijah did not know that were with him.
- e. Paul understood this fact (2 Timothy 4:16-17).
- f. In spite of the nature of the conflict, if God is for us, it doesn't matter who is against us.

III. In spite of criticism.

- a. Notice Romans 8:33.
- b. We know we have an accuser (Revelation 12:10).
 - i. We also have to deal with people who accuse of wrong doing.
 - ii. There are times when the criticism is justified and we have to own our faults.
 - iii. However, there are times when it isn't true and we get hurt by that.
- c. How we deal with criticism is critical to our spiritual survival.
 - i. Remember that God knows our hearts (Luke 16:15; Acts 15:8).
 - ii. If what we are doing is right and just, God knows it.
- d. More often than not, people are critical because they are jealous or want to find fault with someone.
- e. We do need to be open to criticism if it is valid.
 - i. We can all do better.
 - ii. We can all be better.
 - iii. Sometimes, criticism points out the areas that need betterment and we must be open to that.
- f. In spite of the criticism that comes our way, through Jesus, we can live the abundant life and be more than conquerors.

IV. In spite of circumstances.

- a. Notice Romans 8:35 again – “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”.
- b. Then he lists the things we mentioned earlier.
 - i. None of those things can conquer us.
 - ii. None of them can keep us from living the abundant life that Jesus offers.
- c. Notice the Romans 8:38-39.
- d. If tomorrow we are in the grave or in the midst of our fast-paced lives, nothing will separate us from the love of God.
 - i. There is nothing in or of itself in this life or the next that can separate us from the love of God.
 - ii. The stock market is going crazy this week – God still loves us.
 - iii. Nations are arguing with one another – God still loves us.
- e. Paul, by inspiration wrote, nor height nor depth.
 - i. I saw an article the other day about a large meteor that is said to be passing close to earth soon, and if it hits us - God still loves us.

- ii. If the big earthquake hits that people have always said is possible and a deep hole in the earth swallows us up – God still loves us.
- f. Paul wrote that there is no other creature that is able to separate us from the love of God.
 - i. I heard a former general who works at Redstone talk about the wonderful things NASA is trying to do, including go to Mars.
 - ii. If, and I don't believe they will, if they were to find some creature in the depths of space – God still loves us.
- g. I read an account of a lady visiting a worship service one Sunday evening.
 - i. She sat near the preacher's wife and worshiped just like everyone else.
 - ii. After the service, the preacher's wife spoke to her and found out that the visitor had buried her husband that afternoon.
 - iii. She and her husband had made a pact that life nor death would separate them from the love of God and she wanted to be ready to see her husband again in eternity.
- h. In spite of circumstances that arise, we can live the abundant life that Jesus brings and be more than conquerors.

Sermon idea from an unknown source