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.
   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.
   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.
   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 heighth 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