

March 2013 Newsletter – Romans 8

II. Inseparability. v.35 continued

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” - τις ημας χωρισει απο της αγαπης του χριστου θλιψις η στενοχωρια η διωγμος η λιμος η γυμνοτης η κινδυνος η μαχαира.

The next one is **nakedness**, *gumnotes*, which did not mean that you had no clothes, or were naked, but that you were scantily, or poorly, clad. It denoted the idea that one did not have sufficient clothing for the weather, climate and area you were living in. Warm clothes for the cold, rain gear for wet weather, or light, proper clothing for the intolerable heat.

Being without food at times, not having the proper clothing for the condition of weather, and not even having a dwellingplace at times was a condition that Paul and the other men suffered from time to time. Yet God was still with them. *“Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are **naked**, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;”* 1 Corinthians 4:11

God did not promise us finery, or the latest cultural fashions in clothing, as so many wastefully go after today, even Christians. But what he did tell us is to be **content** with the **food** he provides for our bellies. Actually the word for **food** is *diatrophe* and referred to the nutrition our bodies need, which can come from a multitude of sources; and to be content with the **covering** we have for our bodies! *“And having **food** and **raiment** let us be therewith content.”* 1 Timothy 6:8

Peril, *kindunos*, meant to run a risk, to face danger, to be in some sort of jeopardy where one risks losing their life. What makes a peril a peril is not some theoretical possibility that something could happen and you might die; it's not where one thinks up ways where you could lose your life, but **a peril is where you are definitely facing something that could bring about your death!**

Paul gives us several examples of the **perils** he faced as he went out to serve the Lord. Things that he faced that he could have died very easily as the result. Things such as: **crossing rivers**, we know how dangerous just that could be; **robbers** in the city and the country, who would slit your throat just to get your money; from the **Judaizers** from Israel, who were trying to kill him because of the gospel of Christ; from **Gentiles** for the same reason; from just being in the **cities**, (which hasn't changed at all); from being out in the **wilderness**, which is still today a threat to one's survival; from being out at **sea** as one sailed from one place to another; and from **false brethren**. *“In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.”* 2 Corinthians 11:26

The word for **sword** is *machaira* and was the weapon of the Roman army. It was around eighteen inches long and double edged. A very efficient weapon in the hands of a trained soldier, especially when used with the Roman shield.

Now when the word *machaira* was used it could speak of basically three things. **One**, war and military conquest, either by another army, or by the putting down of insurrection. It has the idea of the military involved. **Two**, ordinary violence in an area. **Three**, when revolution sweeps through a country in an attempt to overthrow the existing government. All are threats to the believer. Yet Christ is with us.

JJ. The death of Christ's godly ones. v.36

“As it is written, *For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*” Romans 8:36 - καθως γεγραπται οτι ενεκα σου θανατουμεθα ολην την ημεραν ελογισθημεν ως προβατα σφαγης.

“As it is written, *For thy sake we are killed all the day long;*” - *kathos gegraptai hoti heneka sou thanatoumetha holen ten hemeran.* The word **written**, *gegraptai*, is the perfect passive indicative of *grapho* – to write. It is a quote of Psalm 44:22, “*Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.*” The Septuagint translation has it as, ὅτι ἔνεκα σοῦ θανατούμεθα ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἐλόγισθημεν ὡς πρόβατα σφαγῆς. - “*For your sake we are killed all the day; we are counted as the sheep for the slaughter.*” Psalm 43:23

Being a believer in Christ has never exempted God's people from the many forms of death. And history has certainly proven that. But **God has promised to be there with us in death**, and **he has also promised to give us the grace and strength to go through it!**

Some have glorified Christ on the battlefield of war, as they protected their families. Some have been killed as the result of ministering the Word of God. Some have died as the result of persecution. And some have died because they maintained their testimony for Christ and his Word. “*Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*”, Hebrews 11:34

“*We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*” - *elogisthema hos probata sphages.* The word for **accounted** is the orist passive indicative of *logizomai*. Now *logizomai* was the thinking of the accountant, which is a little disturbing in that it was void of feeling or compassion. To the accountant it was **all a matter of numbers, not any personal sentiment attached to it.**

Which gets into the idea of how the people of God were viewed, as they lost their lives for the sake of Christ. The death of God's children meant actually nothing to those who caused their death, nor to society in general. It was a simple matter of getting rid of people they did not want in society. Their mantra would be that 'the world was better off without them'!

We cannot say that the thinking of the world, (certainly not the thinking of our Father in heaven), was more than and something different than objectivity. It was a matter of total disinterest, no compassion, no feelings along the tender side. I guess it would be the thinking similar to taking the trash out to the garbage – nothing more.

It would be like the homeless on the street, who are hungry, cold and dying, putting their hands out for somebody to help them, only to have hundreds and hundreds of people walk by and not care at all. Or dying alone having no one who cares for you. Or dying with hateful, hardened people who are around you, **but could care less that you are dying!**

We are counted no more than sheep for the slaughter, which gets into the idea of **butchery**. The angry hoards come charging in slaughtering everyone in sight. But wait! I'm important, says the sheep to be slaughtered. I had people who loved me! I'm somebody! I'm a living soul! I'm a person! I'm a child of God! I live and I love! But in one savage moment the hate filled individual strikes you down with his weapon looking at you as nothing more than something to be butchered like an animal.

KK. The conquering Christian. v.37

“*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*” Romans 8:37 - *αλλ εν τουτοις πασιν υπερνικωμεν δια του αγαπησαντος ημας.*

“*Nay, in all these things*” - *all'en toutois pasin*, refers back to the list of trouble in v.35, “*tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword*”. Paul is bringing out, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, these seven categories of crises that believers have gone through, and will go through in life here in the devil's world, not to scare us, but to give us confidence that the Lord will be there with us and take us through the fiery trial!

Many believers incorrectly assume that now they are right with God, and that they have received his love by believing in his Son as their Savior, that they will be exempt from the trials and traumas of life. This is not true. There is something called undeserved suffering, where we suffer, even though we have done nothing wrong to deserve it. “*For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;*” Philippians 1:29

Suffering, regardless of the source it comes from as noted in our passage, when combined with Bible Doctrine, faith and the filling of the Holy Spirit, produces spiritual growth in the believer's soul.

“*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.*” 1 Peter 4:12 “*Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*” 1 Peter 4:19

“*We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*” - *hupernikomen dia tou agapesantos hemas.* Just preceding this part of the verse we have *en plus the locative of sphere*. Which tells us that the activity of the verb, which in this case is being a super-conqueror, takes place in the sphere of the these things, which refers back to the idea found in v.35 again of: “*tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword*”. Which tells us that **we will be conquering the things we go through in life while we are going through them!** It's not that we will “get on top of things” **after** we get through them. But that **we will get on top of the negative situation while we are in it!**

Super-conquering is the present active indicative of *hupernikao* and is a combination of two words; *huper* – above, and *nikao* – to conquer. Now *nikao* had the idea of being the victor over a situation, battle, or fight, but by adding *huper* prefixed to it, it tells us that this conquering is brought up to an entirely different level! To be a super-conqueror means that one has gained a surpassing victory over the situation. It's not just to win, but to **overwhelmingly win!**

And here is how we do this. Here is the secret of how believers in Christ become super-conquerors of all the bad things that life has to throw at us, things that would destroy other people, and it is “*through him that loved us*” - *dia tou agapesantos hemas*. The preposition dia tells us the means by which something happens, and here it's telling us that we are victorious over the things we go through all due to our heavenly Father who loves us.

And how does he do this? By means of the spiritual life dynamic grace provision he has supplied to all believers in Christ in his grace, which consists of: the filling of the Holy Spirit, living in the new man, the provision of confessing our sins to God, prayer, faith in the Father, his plan, his promises, his provision, his protection, and faith in the process he has chosen to complete us.

LL. Paul was convinced in his faith. v.38

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,” - πεπεισμαι γαρ οτι ουτε θανατος ουτε ζωη ουτε αγγελιοι ουτε αρχαι ουτε δυναμεις ουτε ενεστωτα ουτε μελλοντα.

*“For I am persuaded” - pepeismai gar. **Persuaded** is the perfect passive indicative of *peitho*, which has been translated as convinced, obeyed, persuaded and assured. It speaks of having the mental attitude where one has been absolutely convinced that something is true.*

To be **convinced** of something usually takes a period of time. It is not generally something that happens in a moment of time, but is a process that goes on until one does finally become convinced that something is true. As we see in the use of the perfect tense used with it. The perfect tense denotes that an action begins at a point in time, then it looks at the period of time following it where, in this case, other facts are brought in to support the original idea, to the place where the action is completed, which, in this case, is to be convinced of something, and the final result of being convinced carries on into the future.

Case in point was Abraham when God promised him a son. Now Abraham believed God when God promised him a son. And he still believed him over the years. But it wasn't until many years down the road that Abraham was fully convinced that God was going to deliver on his promise, even when he got to the age that he was sexually impotent! **So what was it that convinced him? It was when he was convinced that God had the power to do what he promised to do!** *“And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to **perform**.” Romans 4:21 And **what convinced Sarah to believe God about a son was because she saw the integrity of God!** *“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him **faithful** who had promised.” Hebrews 11:11**

Being **persuaded** here is in the passive voice, which brings out the idea of the subject receiving the action of the verb. Which tells us **Paul received the action of being persuaded**, or convinced, of something to be true, which things he lists in this passage. To be persuaded is to be caused to believe something, either by reason, or by the force of evidence. And in the cases of Abraham and Sarah they **both believed God, but they also observed the evidence that every time that God said he was going to do something for them, he always carried through on his promises!**

To be persuaded is to be caused to believe something, either by reason, or by the force of evidence. But it always implies that there is a threshold one has to overcome to believe something to be true. Now there can be doubt, perhaps some skepticism, which is normal because one should not believe everything that people say in life. But persuasion starts from the standpoint to begin with that one does not know if something is true. Now it may be true. And then it might not be! So, if someone is going to accept something to be true, then there has to be the force of reason or evidence to prevail over my barrier of doubts. That is also assuming that the one you are dealing with is willing to accept the evidence or logic involved and not totally entrenched in negative volition.

That's what being unpersuadable is all about, which is what the problem the Israelites had in the wilderness. God told them to go into the land, but they refused to obey him, because they refused to believe him! But worse than that was **they refused to be persuaded!** *“And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?” Hebrews 3:18*

The word for **believed not** in the passage is *apeitheo*, which denoted the idea of not believing God, but worse than that, **refusing to be persuaded to believe God!** One should believe what God says simply because he says it, which many do. But for some, for whatever the reason, they have a problem believing what God says. It's not that they don't want to, but there is some wall they have in their minds or hearts that keeps them from fully believing him. This is where persuasion comes in. **Persuasion** comes in by using the force of **reason**, or **evidence**, which would be God's mighty works in life, **to prevail over our wall of unbelief!** But the ancient Israelites simply would not be persuaded, no matter what force of doctrinal logic that was used, nor by witnessing the mighty acts he performed with them!

Now persuasion usually takes a period of time. And during that period of time the believer will be going over the promises of God, being taught on various doctrines that pertain to the subject, reviewing what one has learned, being put into a variety of trials where one has to apply by faith the doctrines one has learned, and throughout all this the believer will finally become convinced in his heart. Concerning the trials we go through, we only pass them by the exercising of faith in the Word of God! **If we fail to exercise our faith, then we fail the test!**

Now Paul had become convinced of something in his life regarding his relationship to God. And, as we will see in the grammar, that it didn't happen overnight, but involved a period of time. And as time went by, and as he learned Bible Doctrine and lived by faith, and as he saw God operate over and over in his life, he became convinced, confident and assured of his relationship to the Father and the Son. He was absolutely confident that nothing could separate him from the love of God.

Faith developed to its maximum level, which is what perfected, or completed faith is all about, becomes **confidence**. And with confidence is rest and peace for the soul. Faith in the Word is absolutely crucial in this matter, for believing God and his Word is a continuing process. We take in various doctrines over the years; we apply these doctrines by faith to the various things we go through in life, and this goes on to the place where we are fully convinced and our faith is completed.

The perfect tense of *peitho*, **persuaded**, shows this very thing. It was not an overnight phenomenon for Paul. But one that began at a point in time, his salvation; then it went on over the years, his growth in grace, faith and the Word; and then finally reached its culmination where he was totally convinced. From that point of completion it became a settled part for the rest of his life.

Being **persuaded** here is in the passive voice telling us that Paul did not convince himself of these things, but that it was God who convinced him through the teaching of his Word and seeing God's faithfulness to Paul in his life. Just like Abraham became fully persuaded that God had the power to do what he promised he would do for Abraham in giving him a son!

“Neither death” – *hoti oute thanatos*. The word *oute* is used ten times here in the passage and it means **not**. Who, or what, can separate us from the love of God? Not death! Not life! Not angels! Not demons! He starts off with one of the deepest fears that many people have and that is what is going to happen to me when I die?

Death is a subject that most people, especially unbelievers, do not want to talk about. Yet it is something that all are subject to and what we will all have to face! All, that is, except those believers who are alive at the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ. Remember what **death**, *apothnesko*, is. It is the separation of the soul from the body. The body dies, but the soul doesn't. And **even though there is a separation of the soul from the body there is no separation of the soul from Jesus Christ!**

“**Nor life**” - *oute zoe*. Most people are afraid of death, afraid of how they will die, but they are also afraid of **life**! We wonder what does life hold for me? Will I make it? Will I be a failure? Will I become a cripple, or physically incapacitated in some other way? Will I go crazy? Will I end up in jail? Will I be persecuted? Will I end up homeless? Will I be able to handle the things ahead?

To some **life** is a mountain to be conquered, a challenge awaiting them. While to others, it is something to be endured; a frightening prospect that they hope, somehow, they can make it through. We have all wondered about these things at one time or another in our lives, but instead of talking to us about God's power to get us through all these things in life, which is certainly sufficient for them, Paul talks to us about God's love for us. Life cannot separate us from the love of God/

But whether life to the individual has been one of success or drudgery, boring or fun, enjoyable or tolerable, rewarding or miserable, really doesn't matter, for life itself cannot separate us from the love of God. We have had God's love for us every single moment of our existence here on earth, not matter what the quality of our existence was. Whether we had to live on the street in poverty, or we were able to live in a castle.

“**Nor angels**” - *oute angeloi*. One would have to assume, of course, that this is referring to the evil angels who sided with Satan in the rebellion against God. They can do nothing to separate us from the love of God in this life and in the life that exists after death! But aside from that fact, it lumps all angels together and there are no angels, fallen or unfallen, that can separate us from the love of God.

“**Nor principalities**” - *oute archai*. The word *arche* refers to those who held the highest authority and rank, the first, the pre-eminent of things, and was the term used for fallen angels, unfallen angels and men. It always referred to the highest rulers. “*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*” Ephesians 6:12

The word had its background in the governmental structure of the ancient democracy of Greece, where the nation was ruled by a college of **nine archons**, who ruled over a city. Even today the past director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, said that the world is ruled by a secret group of nine men, but he could never uncover their identity.

The **nine archons** were broken down into the following levels. **Ho Archon** - was the president of the college and he held the highest rank of all. **Ho Basileus** - was the king archon, who ruled under the president of the college, and his position was hereditary. **Ho Polemarchos** - was the military ruler, that is, he ruled over the army of Greece. And then there were the six - **Ho Themothetai** - who were six legislators who formulated policies.

We don't know if Paul borrowed from the Greek structure to explain the demonic structure, or if the Greeks patterned their ruling structure after the demonic! It makes sense to say that the Greek structure of rule is patterned after the demonic, because Satan and his angels were in total control of Greece, (and all other earthly nations for that matter), and it makes doctrinal sense to say that the earthly pattern is a type of the heavenly one.

And if Greece is patterned after Satan's hierarchy, could this same Grecian/Satanic hierarchy be the pattern for ruling the world today? And could this structure of hierarchy be divided into 6 legislators, 60 authorities and 600 *kosmokratoras*?

We do know that the dwelling-place of demons is in **the second heaven** somewhere between our direct sky and the third heaven of God. This places it either outside of the known universe, or it is where the **known universe is their domain!** And remember, the original idea of demons, *daimones*, was one where they were thought to be extra-terrestrial beings of races superior to humans, or aliens.

Some of the references to the dwelling-places of these celestial beings are found in: “***Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,***” Ephesians 1:20,21 “*Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*” Ephesians 2:2 “*To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,*” Ephesians 3:10

Christ defeated these archai on the cross and his victorious resurrection from the dead and took some of them as captives in his triumphal march into heaven. “*And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*” Colossians 2:15 “*And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*” NIV And if Christ defeated the *archai*, then they pose no threat to us because we are in Christ!

“***Nor powers***” - *oute dunameis*. The ancients regarded all celestial beings as powers, or cosmic powers as they called them, which could be good or bad. They also referred to these cosmic powers as *daimones*, which is transliterated into our English word demons. They were thought to be celestial beings from different galaxies, who came to earth periodically to interact with man. Some were regarded as being good, having good intentions for mankind, while others were thought to be bad, having bad designs for man.

They were a level of beings that existed in power and scope somewhere between the higher celestial hierarchies, the rulers and authorities and the lower demons. The higher ones were referred to as the Titans, or Theitans in the Chaldee, who were thought to have interbred with human females creating a race of giants or titans on earth. Anyway, the Lord was victorious over them and they also cannot separate us from the love of God.

“***Nor things present***” - *oute enestota*. The word for **things present** is the perfect active participle of *enistemi*. And comes from two words *histemi* – to stand, and *en* – in, which meant to be at hand, to be present. *Enistemi* had the idea of something that has been coming upon us and is now present, or as we would say, the things presently upon us.

Political situations, economic uncertainty, social unrest, health problems, family crises, inflation, devaluation, tyranny of government, retirement funds being wiped out, the wicked in high places of government, military threat, the list goes on and on of things that we are presently faced with; things that threaten us, yet none of these things we are facing in life will separate us from the love of God! Not even our sins and failures in life!

The problem goes back to our feeling vulnerable and insecure, because we feel like there are things out there that can hurt us. Things that threaten our bodies and souls. And out of that feeling of insecurity comes the emotion of fear! And the fear complex torments our souls every moment of the day. But, if we know that we are loved by God and nothing can separate us from his love, then we will be OK.

*“Nor things to come.” - ou te mellonta. Things to come, or the future, as translated by the NIV, is the present active participle of *mello*. “The things that are upon us in the **present**, and the things that will come upon us in the **future**.” There are two things that bother us. The things that we are presently facing in life, things which could pose a threat to us. And the things that we could face, or will face, in the future. And this due to our feeling vulnerable and insecure. But remember, **nothing in the present and nothing in the future can separate us from the love of God!***

MM. Continued. v.39

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:39 - ουτε υψωμα ουτε βαθος ουτε τις κτισις ετερα δυνησεται ημας χωρισαι απο της αγαπης του θεου της εν χριστω ιησου τω κυριω ημων.

*“Nor height” - ou te hupsoma. **Height**, *hupsoma*, was an astrological term, but it was one of the two words that were used to denote the very highest of something versus *bathos*, the very lowest. **Height** spoke of the heavens, the abode of the angels, so it is referring to any angelic creature, regardless of their position in the celestial hierarchy.*

*“Nor depth” - ou te bathos. *Bathos* referred to the very lowest depth of anything, such as, the deepest part of the sea, or the deepest part of the earth, which would refer to Hades, or Sheol in the OT. “*If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in **hell**, behold, thou art there.*” Psalm 139:8 Heaven and Hell are put as the ultimate heights and depths of everything. “*But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of **hell**.*” Proverbs 9:18*

In theology there is a term given to the work and action of Jesus Christ in his coming down to earth and his going back to heaven. It is the **katabasis** and **anabasis** of Christ. The **katabasis**, from *katabaino* – to go down, is the coming down of Christ from the heights of heaven, down to the depths of Hell. And the **anabasis** of Christ, from *anabaino* – to go up, is his going from the depths of Hell back up to the heights of heaven once again. There is nothing in heaven or Hell that can separate us from God's love.

*“Nor any other creature,” - ou te tis ktisis hetera. The word for **creature** is *ktisis* and refers to a created thing, and *hetera* refers to different kinds of created things. What Paul has done, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is sum up all things created, whether they live in heaven or hell, and says **that there is not one of them that can separate us from the love of God!***

An interesting question is, why would he go through all the trouble of listing every single possibility of things that could separate us from the love of God? A simple, “nothing can separate us from the love of god” would suffice! The reason why is that there will always be someone out there who could come up with some possible scenario and this nips that in the bud!

*“Shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” - dunesetai hemas chorisai apo tes agapes tou theou tes en christo iesou to kurio hemon. The word for **able** here is the future middle indicative of *dunamai*, which gets into the idea of power. And the word for **separate** is the aorist active infinitive of *chorizo* – to divide, or separate.*

This gets into the idea of **power** and what this tells us is that there is nothing and no one **that has the power** to separate us from the love of God, which exists in the person of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! **And all believers in Christ are in him!**