

Six Vital Security Questions

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Date: 19 April 2026

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[0:00] I have the gift of handouts, apparently. You know, at the adult Bible study that I'm a part of, I occasionally will fill in for the regular teacher.

! It's sort of an ongoing joke. He never gives handouts. He always has PowerPoint. And I always give handouts. So I used to tell them that I'm sort of like the pre-Doge government, you know, with lots of handouts.

Anyway, I don't want to get political at all. But now, you guys, did you get slides? You did. Great. How about that? There we go. Now, we're going to be in Romans 8 this morning.

And this is a joy for me to be in this text for a number of reasons. One, it's a really joyful passage. But also, since I've moved to Virginia, I hardly ever seem to get to preach from the New Testament. You know, I pastored for years and taught through a lot of the New Testament. But now that I'm the resident Old Testament professor, I think I'm preaching on average about once a month in various churches and chapel. And this is only the second time since I've been in Virginia that I've preached for the New Testament.

[1:01] So just to prove that I can do that, you know, we're here today. But also, I know that Dr. Davey has been with you for this month. And he has brought some messages from Romans.

Did I say Revelation a moment ago? I said, okay, Romans. And I think you're going to be back in Romans next week. So he and I talked a little bit to make sure I didn't want to mow his lawn. And so we're going to be in Romans 8 in a moment.

And you can see from the handout and from the slide, the title of our study today is six vital security questions. Boy, so much of our life now is lived online, isn't it?

And that means passwords and forgetting your passwords. And all the hoops you've got to go through when you try to recover your password. And often it gets to the point of answering the security questions that you set up when you created your account with whatever it is.

And sometimes those security questions are a little too secure. You know, there's some accounts I set up years ago. And the answer is your favorite restaurant. And who would have guessed that 15 years ago my favorite restaurant wouldn't be the same one that it is today.

[2:11] And I enter that, no, that didn't work. And then there's questions like, you know, what was the first concert you went to? I grew up as a fundamental Baptist. I didn't go to concerts. I don't have anything I can put in that, you know.

So, well, this morning's message we're going to talk about some security questions. But these security questions are not meant to stump you. They're meant to encourage you.

In fact, they all have the same answer. They all have the answer of either nothing or no one. They're not questions intended to keep people out.

They're questions intended to encourage those who are inside of Christ. Answering these questions doesn't increase our security. But thinking through them does increase our sense of security that we enjoy in Christ's salvation.

By his grace in Christ, God has placed us in his saving plan in which we are utterly and unquestionably secure.

[3:15] I want you to think about this sentence as we go through our study today. How Paul celebrates our salvation with six faith-stimulating questions to show us that we are unquestionably secure.

I'd like us at this time to read Romans 8, beginning in verse 31, and we'll go to the end of the chapter. What then shall we say to these things?

If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own son, but delivered him over for us all, how will he not also with him freely give us all things?

And then the following verse, there's a simple question. Verse 34, who is the one who condemns? And the answer is still no one, but there's a complex answer given. Christ is the one who died and he's been raised and he's in heaven.

And then the next one is super complex. The simple question is, who shall separate us, or what shall separate us from the love of Christ? And there's this long, long, long explanation as to why the answer is no one or nothing.

There's a list of possible suspects. There's a concession. Yes, we do face trouble. And then there's a statement of great certainty and joyful celebration.

This is a beautifully written portion of scripture. Paul is celebrating our salvation with six faith-stimulating questions to show us that we are unquestionably secure.

[10:22] Now, I want you to come with me back to verse 31. We're going to look at that first question. And what I've done here is summarized the question and its answer and its reason.

This first half of verse 34 teaches us that there is no final dissatisfaction in our salvation. Now, the question is very simple. It says, what then shall we say to these things?

This is the simplest of the six questions. It introduces all the others. The first thing we have to ask is, what are these things that he mentions? These things. Well, I take that to be all the glorious things that he said about salvation earlier in chapter 8.

How the Spirit has worked within us and we've been adopted and he's moving us towards righteousness. In fact, you could even connect it back further to verses 29 and 30 talk about God's election and justification and sanctification and glorification.

All these things are linked together in our experience in Christ. It is an unbreakable chain of grace. What shall we say? I mean, the thought of that is, I mean, is there anything missing with this?

[11:37] Is there something that's not covered by this? Could someone point out, oh, well, that doesn't account for that? And the answer is no.

This great saving plan of the Lord is all-encompassing. God's salvation is so perfect. There's no criticism that can diminish its glory.

Ultimately, there will be no disappointments with what God does for us in Christ. There'll be no lasting dissatisfaction when we get to the end.

Think, hmm, well, that didn't turn out as I thought. You know, there's all kinds of things in life that have great promise. You think they're going to be great, and then you come to the end of it like, oh, that wasn't quite what I thought.

Shortly after we moved here to Virginia, we bought a new minivan. And, man, we researched. You know, I won't tell you the brand because I don't want to. But anyway, so they said, okay, this kind of van is good, but avoid these years, get these years.

[12:42] And we did. And we got a single owner, no accidents. California history, so no exposure to salt. We thought, that's great. And we had shipped out here. And then breaks down.

Huh, that's funny. And then breaks down again and breaks down again and found out that the engine had blown. And we went through two alternators. And then the oil spool blew and contaminated the catalytic converter.

Like, well, so much for, huh, huh. Well, we've been on an odyssey with it, I'll tell you. I guess I just told you what kind it was. But, you know, when it comes to salvation, the promises that are made about it never come up to the end.

Well, that didn't turn out like we'd thought. No, there was no final dissatisfaction with our salvation. Well, let's keep going. The second part of verse 31 is the second question that's raised.

Where it says, if God is for us, who is against us? And what this question and its implied answer teaches us is that there is no successful opposition to our salvation.

[13:56] No successful opposition. Now, when it says, if God is for us, that's not implying, well, maybe God's for us and maybe he isn't. Now, he's speaking to a Christian audience here, isn't he?

He's speaking to Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome, of whom he is certain they know the grace of life. You could, in essence, translate this, since God is for us, who can be against us?

Now, how do we know God is for us? Huh. Well, of course, it's written in Scripture, but it was also put on dramatic display on the cross.

And if there ever comes a point where you wonder, does God really love me? You, with your mind's eye, you go back to the cross and see how God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son.

That little phrase, God is for us. God is for us. That is the gospel in a nutshell.

[15:03] God is for us. Now, it's true that there might be many in the world who are against us. There are many in the world who oppose the Christian gospel.

They oppose Christian people. They wish we would stop talking about the gospel. Stop insisting that the gospel is the one and only good news, the means of salvation.

God is for us, but that does not mean we do not have enemies. There are people against us. Satan is against us. Paul had many enemies against him in his gospel work, didn't he? Yes, there are many against us.

But when you view them in comparison with God, in the end, they're but nothing. This is the kind of talk that the psalmists used to speak.

Like David would say in Psalm 23, verse 4, I will fear no evil. Why? For you are with me. Or how about Psalm 56, verse 11.

[16:07] In God I have put my trust. I will not be afraid. What can man do unto me? Or how about Psalm 118, verse 6.

The Lord is for me. I will not fear. What can man do to me? That was one of Martin Luther's favorite verses. And it's partly the inspiration behind that line in his hymn, In a Mighty Fortress.

And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us.

As we live in the awareness of Christ's presence and his gospel promises, we can have this perspective also. That in the end, our oppositions, our opponents, will not be successful.

If God is for us, who can ultimately be against us? Let's go on to the third question. And we see that in verse 32.

[17:17] And this one is going to teach us that there is no conceivable imperfection in our salvation. No conceivable imperfection.

Look how verse 32 begins. Notice how this is the most elaborate of the three questions we've seen so far.

It is multiplex. But the answer is still the same as the others. The answer is, no way. There's no way that he would not freely give us, with him, all things.

There's no imperfection. There's nothing lacking. There's no incompleteness. No deficiency in our salvation. God's not redeemed us so he might bring us to a certain point and then withdraw his hand of provision and preservation and say, well, now you're on your own.

That's not how salvation works. I mean, how could he? I want you to consider the giver of salvation. That's how this sentence begins. He who did not spare his own son, but delivered him up for us all.

[18:38] He's talking about the father. The father didn't spare his own son. He gave his own son for us. He delivered him up. He didn't even spare his own son.

There's an intensive word there. This is very similar language than what's found in Genesis 22 in the story of Abraham offering up his son Isaac, where the Lord told him to take your son, your only son, and offer him up.

What a difficult test for anyone to obey. It was doubly difficult for Abraham because God had promised him, remember, that he would make him a great nation out of his descendants.

And so far, this is the only legitimate descendant he has. And after decades of waiting in his old age, he finally has this legitimate son. How would God keep this promise if he was required to give up his son's life?

But Abraham believed God and was willing to trust him through the unthinkable. And that willingness on Abraham's part is something that was lauded all throughout Jewish history.

[19:48] But God's sacrifice of his son, Jesus Christ, was worth far more than anything Abraham ever could have offered. His sacrifice, God's sacrifice of his son, was not a test of love.

It was a testament of love. He actually gave him up. He delivered him up. And the sacrifice was for us all, that little expression for here in this text suggests, in our place, as our substitute.

Because Christ has been given as our substitute, he has secured for us every other associated grace. So we've considered the giver of salvation.

I mean, if he gave us the greatest, how would he withhold from us that which is less? So think about the benefits of salvation. So the question is framed up this way.

How will he, the Father, not also with him, Christ, freely give us all things? Freely give us all things.

[21 : 00] Without price, without stipulation. When we receive Christ, in some sense, we receive all things. Okay, now what's that mean?

All things. It can't mean all the money in the world, otherwise we'd be dressed differently today, I suppose. And I wouldn't have, be on an odyssey with my minivan. So the context has to determine what all things is, of course.

Most of chapter 8 has been talking about the work of the Spirit, as God applies his grace within our lives through the means of his Spirit. So the all things would then be all things that pertain to salvation.

All the things that have been promised in salvation. All of the help and support in this life. All of the shared glory in the life to come. I mean, this is the kind of thing Paul talks about.

He prays about this for his churches. Like in Ephesians 1.18. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of his calling.

[22 : 05] What are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. See, that's the kind of all things he's talking about here. Or Peter puts it this way.

2 Peter 1, verse 3. Seeing that his divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness. That's the kind of all things.

I mean, what would it be like that if God gave us Christ, but then withheld from us lesser things associated with Christ? It would be like someone saying, I'm going to give you a car.

And they give you the car, and then they say, but there's no key. Well, now why would you give that and withhold that?

That wouldn't make any sense. And this is the way it is in our salvation. God has given us Christ, and in him we have all. All that's been promised in the gospel comes with him.

[23 : 10] When God gave up his son for us, he gave us all the things that go with him. All the grace we need to persevere. All the confidence we need to face this life.

All the joy to compensate our troubles and our trials. His presence all the time to assure our hearts that we are his. Yes, all the things that are promised us in the gospel are ours because he has given us Christ.

So, so far we've seen three of these six vital security questions. We're coming now into the next three, and as I mentioned before, these three are structured a little bit differently.

These will each begin with a question, a simple question, and the answer to all of these questions is still no one, nothing, never.

But following those questions will be reasons why that's the answer. So let's go now to the fourth question, which we're going to find in verse 33.

[24 : 20] This question and its explanation teaches us there is no permissible accusation against our salvation.

Look with me at verse 33. Here's that simple question. Who will bring a charge against God's elect? So that's the question.

A charge is a legal accusation. This is the imagery of a court of law. You know, in the Bible, it seems as if that God's heavenly court is always in session.

Satan is described as the accuser of the brethren who periodically makes appearances before God's tribunal as a lawyer. You know, I don't have this in my notes, but I can't resist.

You know, the name Satan is not actually a name. It's a title. And it means an opponent. In fact, if you go to Israel today into a court of law, and there's the podiums.

[25 : 28] There's one for the defendant and there's one for the prosecutor. And the prosecutor, it says on the podium, Satan. Hmm. Any of you pursuing a career in law, just bear that in mind.

Now, we need good lawyers. But this text is envisioning that there's bad ones. There's people who want to make charges against God's people. Who will bring a charge against God's elect?

Now, right there, referring to God's people that way, God's elect, that has a very disarming impact on the thought of facing legal charges.

God's chosen ones. The ones God has chosen for salvation. That disarms accusation right away. This brings you back to verse 30, which I read rapidly earlier.

Verse 30, those whom he predestined, he also called. That's the same kind of term. Those who he called, he also justified. These whom he justified, he also glorified.

[26 : 34] Now, Satan might well bring accusations against God's people, claiming that we're unworthy, that we're inconsistent, and that may very well be true.

In fact, it is true. We are unworthy. And we are inconsistent. But none of those accusations in God's final court are admissible.

Because you see, in the gospel, the case has already been decided. The verdict has already been rendered. Christ, our substitute, has taken our guilt. And so you see, there's a statement that follows this in verse 33.

It says, it is God who justifies. So, don't read that to mean, who will bring a charge against God's elect? It's going to be God. That's not the way it works.

The statement here, it is God who justifies, is not the answer to the question. It's the reason that the question is nobody. Nobody can bring a permissible accusation in God's tribunal because God himself justifies the ungodly through the work of his son.

[27 : 47] Since God has justified his elect and declared case closed, who could ever bring a successful accusation against them that would be admissible in God's court?

Would someone dare say that God has been unjust? Oh no. No. I don't mean by this, beloved, to suggest that we as God's people are unaccountable.

That we can get away with murder. That we can do whatever we want. That no one can ever point out flaws and we need to take an account for that. No, there is discipline within the household of God. But this passage is not talking about internal discipline.

It's talking about final judgment. And when it comes to final judgment, we know that our plea has been heard. It's that wonderful hymn before the throne of God above.

I have a strong and perfect plea, a great high priest whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on his hands.

[28 : 52] My name is written on his heart. And I know that while in heaven he stands, no tongue can bid me for God the just is satisfied to look on him and pardon me.

Amen. Now you may feel sometimes the accusatory sting of our enemy poking at your guilty conscience. But the gospel assures you that in God's court that accusation is inadmissible because your case is closed and sealed in Christ.

There is no permissible accusation against our salvation. Come with me to the fifth question in verse 34.

This one will overlap some with this last one. This is going to teach us that there's no potential condemnation in our salvation. Verse 34 opens with the question, who is the one who condemns. Slightly different than the previous one. Number four, question number four deals with a legal accusation. Whereas question number five is dealing with a legal decision.

[30 : 33] The only one who can effectively condemn is God. And I tell you, outside of Christ, without Christ, we are utterly hopeless before God's holy bar.

Now, I'm speaking this message today to professing Christians, but I know that in a house, any gathering of God's people that it's likely that there are some who don't know Christ yet, who have not received His salvation and the newness of life in Him.

And I exhort you to come to Christ and throw yourself upon Him because without Him you have no legal standing before God. Your sins will find you out.

But the good news of the gospel is that there is deliverance from that verdict which we deserve.

And how can we be certain that God has actually acquitted us if we're in Christ?

Well, look how Paul is going to pad, he's going to add four clauses in the next sentence. They pile up one on top of the other, explaining why the answer to this question is no one.

[31 : 44] No one will condemn us if we're in Christ. Why? Well, firstly, Christ was condemned in our place. That's what the beginning of verse 34 says, or the middle of verse 34, Christ Jesus is He who died.

You see, Jesus has already been condemned for you and me. and as the perfect Son of God, His substitution is more than sufficient to pay the price for all of your sins.

Christ was condemned in our place. Christ was raised to give us proof that His sacrifice was accepted. It says, Christ Jesus is He who died.

Yes, rather who was raised. So our suffering Savior, did not come to an eternal end after He gave His life for us.

He rose from the dead and confirmed to us all in so doing that His sacrifice was accepted. That's one of the purposes of the resurrection, is to prove that the sacrifice He offered was in fact accepted by God.

[33 : 01] Now there's other things that the resurrection accomplishes, glorious things, and you reflected on this recently, I'm sure, on Easter Sunday. You know, there's a reason why we as believers, what we call the Lord's Day is a Sunday, not a Friday.

Traditionally, we believe our Lord died on a Friday, and you could reason we should meet on Fridays. But you see, that event on Friday takes on its fullest significance when we see what happened on Sunday.

And that's why we meet on this day of the week. Without the resurrection, the New Testament claimed that Christ accomplished anything would be hard to believe.

The resurrection proves that He accomplished what He set out to do. Christ was condemned in our place, Christ was raised to give us proof, and Christ is in heaven to make our plea.

Now He is at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. He sits in a position of honor and power and glory, right at the right hand of the Father.

[34 : 12] Think of this now. When Jesus went back to heaven, He received again the glory that He had ceased enjoying for a while in His humanity.

And He added to Himself a new glory in His humanity, a glorified humanity, eternity, and our Savior is forever a man. He is the God-man, but He is forever a man.

He is our man in heaven who intercedes for us, who fully understands us, and makes our case for us. He makes intercession.

Now, don't misunderstand this imagery. It would be possible to misunderstand us to think that the Father in heaven seated on His throne looks upon His people, and we blow it, and we fall short, and we bring shame on the name of Christ.

And you could misunderstand the thing that God sits up there, and it's just fuming. He's mad at it, and He wants to damn us, but Christ says, no, no, no, no, no, no. So that would be a misunderstanding about the Trinitarian interaction.

[35 : 18] It's not that Jesus is keeping the Father from flying off the handle. No. This is, again, courtroom imagery. It's about our legal position of the Father and helping us to understand this new standing that we have.

And there are requests that we make, and they come to the Father through the Son. And the Spirit aids in all of it. There is no potential condemnation in our salvation.

Well, now we come to the last question, and look how many verses this is going to take. Four verses. Wait a second. Five, five, six, six, seven, eight, seven, five.

Five verses. My math. Yeah, I wasn't a math major. This last question is going to teach that there is no imaginable separation from our salvation.

Verse 35 asks the question, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Here's the final and what will end up being the most elaborate rhetorical question.

[36 : 36] Now, in the Greek text, there is only one question from here to the end of the chapter, and it's what we just read. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Many of our Bible versions have another question here at the end of verse 35.

But in the Greek text, there is no second question. There's just the one. The things which follow are sort of like a list of suspects. So as you keep reading in verse 35, the Greek text is simply tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword.

Just seven nouns. It starts with the most general, tribulation, and goes to very particular ones at the end.

Tribulation is a general term for pressure, affliction, difficulty. Usually external pressure from circumstances.

Whereas distress tends to focus more on internal pressure, anxiety, anguish, uncertainty. Those two often go together, don't they?

[37 : 51] And then there's persecution. This is becoming a little more specific. This is personal suffering for the sake of your faith. And it can take all sorts of shapes from mild to extreme, from words and opinions to pain.

And then there's famine listed. Hunger. This is an impersonal sort of thing. When famine occurs, it's not that it's targeting people, everyone suffers under it.

Sometimes though, believers might go through a period of deprivation because of persecution. And then there's nakedness.

An example of having deficiencies, deficient covering, just for your own protection, for your own dignity. poverty. Sometimes Christian people go through periods of great deprivation. Peril is the sixth one. Life jeopardizing situations of all sorts of things. Brought on maybe by enemies, brought on by sovereign circumstances.

[39 : 02] And then look at that last one. This is, can I say it, the most pointed of them all. Sword. And you know, Paul, I should say, had experienced all of the previous six already.

He had been through great tribulation and distress and persecution and he talks about sometimes not having enough to eat. And he writes to the Philippians a few years later. Nakedness, peril, peril at sea, peril at the hands of his countrymen and sword.

That would be the way that Paul would go to meet Jesus. Can these things separate us from the love of Christ? No. No.

And by the way, this list is just representative. This is not an exhaustive list. Don't think, well, my trouble is not in that list. We could add many, many, many things to this list of suspects.

So let's think of some. I mean, what else might we fear could separate us from the love of Christ? Bankruptcy? Chronic pain?

[40 : 27] Failure? Divorce? cancer? Abandonment?

Rejection? We could spend a long time adding to the list of suspects. But nothing you have ever experienced or ever think you might experience can separate you from Christ.

You know, when you think about the sword, the irony of it, the irony of it, for Paul, the sword wouldn't keep him from Christ. The sword would be the means that took him to Christ.

Now, before I get going too much, I want you to look with me, I meant to advance that. Now, verse 36. Verse 36 is kind of an aside.

Verse 36 talks about the lot of God's people. It is common that God's people suffer. And so, he's going to quote from Psalm 44, verse 22.

[41 : 46] Paul says, 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.

this is from a psalm of lament, in which the psalmist is talking about how it is that God's people, as innocent parties, often suffer.

You know, we feel as though, at times, yes, we're God's flock, but sometimes we feel like we're going off to the butcher. And, without explaining everything in that psalm, it's a beautiful passage, passage, and I will tell you, this verse, Psalm 44, verse 22, along with Romans 8, verse 36, was a favorite verse amongst early Christians who dealt with martyrdom.

Paul quotes this verse, and all he's doing by quoting this, he's not trying to explain everything in the passage, he just wants us to think about the fact that suffering is not a new problem for God's people.

Throughout the centuries, through the millennia, God's people have gone through great difficulty. God's people have always been a suffering people. But Paul doesn't leave it there, he ends with talking about our certainty of victory.

[43 : 16] Verse 37, but in all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer.

It seems as though the Apostle Paul has coined a new Greek word in this verse. We can't find reference to it in the Greek language before this place in the book of Romans.

Some of our versions render it as more than conquerors. That's good. The Greek term is something like we over conquer. We super conquer through him who loved us.

That doesn't mean we avoid all experience of trouble. We will escape it, but not necessarily avoid it. We will be brought through it, sometimes around it. but in the end we will be victorious. None of our experiences, not even the worst of them, proves that we are losers and on the outs with God.

[44 : 31] Really, we have the upper hand. We are made victorious, even if we face one of these life-ending things. Because, as Paul says, to die is to be with Christ.

None of these sufferings prove that Christ no longer loves us, and none of them can overpower Christ's love. We can continue to be assured of Christ's love, even when the battle of the ages seems to be not going so well on our end.

No matter what happens, Christ is for you, and you will be with Christ in final victory. We overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us.

See, and this is not because of our courage, our endurance, our determination, or even our hold on Christ. It's because of Christ's hold on us.

We are now more than conquerors. Through him who loved us, loved, past tense. That doesn't mean he doesn't love us anymore.

[45 : 41] But again, it's pointing us back to the great display of his love on the cross. Again, you question whether or not you feel, you wonder, does God, does Christ really love me?

Look at the cross where he did that for you. Love was displayed on the cross where Christ went through the greatest suffering and overcame in resurrection.

And if he overcame, and you are in him, you will overcome also. Now, if that doesn't satisfy you, Paul continues in the next couple verses, for I am convinced, he says.

Now, this is the first time he mentions himself in all of this. He's going to talk now about his personal investment of faith and trust in these truths. He is thoroughly convinced that nothing, no nothing, can interrupt the flow of Christ's love.

And he's going to list out now some more suspects, some formidable opponents. There are ten of them he lists. Most of them paired, a couple of them stand alone.

[46 : 49] So the first pair is this, that neither death nor life. Death. That's the great enemy, isn't it? You know, in the book of Romans, death has been a major character.

Death threatens to consume all. All outside of Christ are overcome by death. They're even dead in their sins already. There's a spiritual death leading to a physical death leading to an everlasting death.

But if you're in Christ, death, the great hostile power cannot separate you from Christ. I mean, to die is gain. Far better.

Death couldn't conquer Christ. It won't conquer you. Life. Life with all of its difficulties and its responsibilities and its uncertainties.

Life even in its keeping us absent from the immediate presence of the Lord right now. Life cannot keep us from Christ's love. To live, Paul says, is Christ.

[47 : 59] There's another pair he gives. Nor angels, nor principalities. And I take this to be the good kind of spirits and the bad kind of spirits.

There is no satanic force, no matter how high up, no matter how well orchestrated, no matter how deceptive, there is no satanic force that can break us out of Christ's love.

and say, well, what about good angels? Well, how might good angels be a threat? Well, perhaps it is the case that good angels are used to escort people to their everlasting punishment.

That's not going to happen to you. You need not fear them. There's two more phrases he gives. nor things present, nor things to come.

Opposites in time. There might be all sorts of awful things in your present that you might fear signal God's disapproval or judgment. That might be an indicator that God isn't with you or for you, that somehow he's not fulfilling verse 28, working all things together for good.

[49 : 19] But even if your present circumstances are the worst case scenario you could envision, it cannot undo Christ's grip on you.

Now, frankly, most of us are more worried about things that haven't happened yet. At least when things happen, we know they're here and we can face it. But the unknown, things to come, that's probably what most of our anxiety is spinning its wheels on.

And you know, the most terrifying things to come are the judgments which are going to fall on this world at the end of the age. And if you are in Christ, you have been saved from the wrath to come as well.

We needn't fear falling under his wrath. Even if the whole world shakes, we are unshaken. Now, there's one that's listed by itself, nor powers.

Most often used, this noun is used of demonic beings. This one isn't paired with anything else. Maybe because it's connected with things to come, in the age to come, we're going to see, for a period of time, a brief period, of Satan's kingdom on earth, unleashed.

[50 : 39] And demonic powers, at their worst, cannot separate you from Christ's love. death. There's another pair given, nor height, nor depth.

This is opposites of space. There's no amount of space that can separate you from Christ. There's no place where you can go where his love does not reach.

Where can you flee from his spirit? You can't. there's no realm where his love does not extend to his own. And then there's that last one, nor any other created thing.

This is his catch-all. I'm sure there's something else that could be listed, paired together, but anything else. Maybe you could imagine other fearful things.

It doesn't matter what you can imagine. It can't break you away from him. no other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[51 : 58] Christ who loved us on the cross still loves us now, and he will love us forever. If we are in Jesus Christ, nothing, no, nothing can ever break that bond of saving love that God has crafted.

We have probed this morning the gospel with six questions, six faith-stimulating questions, six gospel-probing meditations that assure us we are unquestionably secure.

There's really no question about how secure we are. God's salvation has placed us in a grip of grace which requires no memorization of funny clues and codes, no need to update your password, to account for new threats, your security can't be hacked or stolen.

So if you ever start to worry that things have somehow gone too far, that you're out of God's grip, or that God doesn't really love you, or you hear the tempter's call, or hear his accusations, remember these security questions, and the answer you put into each one of them is nothing, no one, because we are unquestionably secure in him.

Lord, we are encouraged by this rich, rich portion of Scripture. we are moved, as we see how Paul was moved by the grip of grace, and we think about the certainty and assurance that it gave him and his troubles, and his travels, and his tribulations.

[54 : 14] Lord, we are people that face many kinds of trouble and difficulty. There are some things we've been through, we wondered how we would get through them, there are troubles we don't know yet that faces.

Oh, Lord, keep us centered on the gospel and the certainty that you love us. It's been displayed on the cross, and it's made certain to us every day as your spirit holds us tight.

So, Lord, strengthen our courage in you. We ask it in Christ's name.