

I KNOW part 15: “Nothing Will Separate Me From Christ” 03.25.12

Scripture: Romans 8:35a;38-39 NIV

Video: “Romans 8:38-39” by Visual Scripture

Intro: We began this study on November 20th - 4 months ago. God laid on my heart the importance of KNOWING rather than FEELING our Christian faith. Consider that over this time: #1) Mary Kay lost her mom; #2) Rachel went through cancer scare; #3) Dick entered into much pain and suffering; #4) Lincoln born 3 months premature. Things we had no idea would happen have happened - and God through His Spirit has been working to remind you throughout of one key message, today's key message: “Nothing Will Separate You From Christ - NO MATTER WHAT!”

We as human beings are particularly hard to accept someone else's *unconditional love* - including God's! Type in “How can I prove my love?” into your Google browser and you will quickly discover 141 MILLION results! Poems, Lyrics, Songs, Books, Advice. *Most of it is pretty silly {begin playing Lightfoot mp3}* including this 1993 classic from Gordon Lightfoot. Notice the extremes in the song. “Any way the wind may blow. Any way the creek may flow. Any way the crow may fly. Anywhere the song is king. Anywhere the lake is cold. Anywhere the bell is tolled.” Guys, I don't advise singing this song to your sweethearts! *{end mp3}* The problem with all these human attempts to prove our love is that we really have no way to do what we say. We're not really in control. But God has his own love poetry for you today! Romans 8:35-39. And unlike humans, God can back up every word He writes!

The 7 KEY Questions. Romans 8 has been leading us to this day with 7 key questions. Do you see them in Romans 8:31-35?

Question #1: *What then shall we say to these things?* (v.31) What things? Everything we've learned so far. That God is always with us. That He calls us His adopted children. That we have an inheritance. That His Spirit intercedes for us. That His Son intercedes for us. That God has freed us from sin and has provided for our salvation. That there will come a day when we will be glorified with Him and for Him! What is there to say to these things but HALLELUJAH! PRAISE GOD!

Question #2: *If God is for us who can be against us?* (v. 31) How can we be down about anything when we know we have God on our side?

Question #3: *If God didn't spare his own son, will he not graciously give us all things?* (v. 32) How much more can God be for us? What more could God possibly do to prove His great love toward us?

Question #4: *Who will bring any charge against God's elect?* (v.33) It's God who chose you - before you were a twinkle in your mom's eye. It is God who justifies, Who can make you and your ways right!

Question #5: *Who is to condemn?* God's son is judge. Yet He is also the one who has died for you so that you might live forever with Him. He is the one who is advocating for you! There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ! (v.1)

Question #6: *Is there anything you will face in this life* - no matter how dreadful or terrible or difficult - that will separate you from Christ's love? That will cause you to be defeated? (v. 35b last weekend) Nothing! **No trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger or sword!**

THE 7th QUESTION: Is There ANYTHING or ANYONE Else that could separate me from God's love? *Even beyond this life? Even beyond what I know now?* And the ANSWER IS... **NO! Not even the extremes of:**

#1. Nothing in the extremes of EXISTENCE.

“...neither death nor life...” Romans 8:38b NIV

We don't know anything other than life. For us there is only existence with the “on” switch; everything is nonexistent with the “off” switch. But God says that neither death nor life can separate you from God's love! And He proved it when He resurrected Jesus, His son. That gives you the faith to know that death will not keep you from His love either!

#2. Nothing in the extremes of OTHER CREATED BEINGS.

“...neither angels nor demons... nor powers...” Romans 8:38c NIV

Then Romans 8:38 begins moving in some unexpected directions. Paul begins to imagine the other created beings *beyond our natural realm*. (1st) there are angels. How could (or why would) angels keep us from God? But we think of angels as guarding Heaven, as surrounding God. And we know that they are powerful, even frightening beings. But they will never keep us from God's love! Not only that but (2nd) there are the fallen angels, the still very powerful, frightening beings whose will has been turned away from God's will and love, and yet these “rulers” of the earth do not have the ability to separate you from God's love. Even (3rd) “powers” - things that happen that we can't explain, from beings we don't even know exists - beyond the plain of good and evil, right and wrong, can't keep God's love from you!

#3. Nothing in the extremes of TIME.

“...neither the present nor the future...” Romans 8:38d NIV

Then the text turns to dimensions of time. It could just be very simply that nothing that could happen to you in the future - “things to come” - could keep God's love from you. But in the context of the passage, there could be more here: Nothing inside of time or outside of time could keep God's love from you. We live in a linear world, where events line up one after the other. A world of cause and effect. But time is one of God's creation. He invented time. He is in control of time and of anti-time, for lack of another word. There is nothing that could happen - in linear sequence of events as we understand them - or outside of that sequential periods of minutes, days, months and years - that could ever keep us from God's love!

#4. Nothing in the extremes of SPACE.

“...neither height nor depth...” Romans 8:38e NIV

This is beginning to feel like a Star Trek episode! Not only is there anything in the extremes of time, there's also nothing in the extremes of space - neither height nor depth - that can keep you from God's love. Again, we live in a world of dimensions, of space, of ups and downs, ins and outs, a world of matter. Just like time, matter is something that God created. $e=mc^2$ is God's idea, not Einstein's! Here is what God is saying: There is no energy, no matter, no mass, no relativity... there is NOTHING that keeps you from God's love!

#5. Nothing in the extremes of ANY OTHER CONTINUUM, KNOWN OR UNKNOWN, IMAGINED, REAL, OR OTHERWISE WITHOUT FOOTNOTE, SMALL PRINT OR EXCEPTION.

“...nor anything else in all creation ...” Romans 8:38f NIV

QB Illustration: Not the most experienced NFL QB (Peyton Manning) or the most promising QB (Tim Tebow) has a guarantee. Each of us have been disappointed by work or personal relationship. But God is different!

The PERFECT AND FOREVER I KNOW!

“for I am sure...” v.38

πείθω peithō - to convince, persuade;

πέπεισμαι pepeithomai - makes it passive, perfect, personal. I have been and continue to be convinced; ... persuaded.

The **passive** (outside-in) persuaded, convinced, trusting and assured - it's not just that I have convinced myself, but I have been convinced by something else. God has moved on me and I can see what He has accomplished. All my experience with God has convinced me!

The **perfect** (continuous) persuaded, convinced, trusting and assured - it's not just something that has happened in the past that I rely upon now and in the future. It's perfect, meaning continuous. God continues to prove Himself to me over and over again, continuously.

The **personal** persuaded, convinced, trusting and assured. This is in the first person. Not “you” are convinced. Not “he” is convinced. Not “we” are convinced. I. First personal singular. Faith after all is a first person, singular kind of experience. I don't become convinced... the I KNOW experience... because my mom or my dad, my wife or my husband, my pastor, or anyone else knows. I must be convinced like Paul was convinced for himself. He uses this verb in this form in two places to talk about his faith in God. The first is here in Romans 8:38-39:

“For I am sure that [nothing in any extreme] will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39

The other is his conversation with Timothy. As I read this to you, ask yourself if you can say this without reservation yourself? Is this “I KNOW” outside-in, continuous, and personal?

“I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. 2 Timothy 1:12b NIV

How about you? Is your “I KNOW” passive, perfect & personal? Do you have an “I KNOW” experience with Christ?

Have you felt the “passive” (outside-in) experience of God's Spirit moving on you? Not something you have to work up inside-out. Even now as we speak you know somehow from the outside of yourself that you can feel God, that you can experience God, that you know somehow “outside of yourself” that He is here and present and that you can KNOW Him?

Have you experienced the “perfect” I KNOW convincing of God, over and over again, that He is real, that He loves you, and that nothing could ever separate you from the greatest love ever possibly known?

Is it “personal” for you? Do YOU know Christ as your Savior? as your Lord? as the One Who loves you PERSONALLY and who will never ever give up on you, no matter what!

Conclusion. We have invested 15 weeks into this "I KNOW" series. Do you own it? Maybe more importantly, **does it own you?** Unlike our love songs to one another - exaggeration without force - there is no "poetic license" with God. Unlike our work or personal lives, God never breaks a contract, never misleads, always goes above and beyond! He really will prove Himself (passive). He really will keep on proving Himself (perfect). But only you can make it "I KNOW;" Only you can make it personal.

Prayer.

Sing "Amazed" by Desperation Band.

Communion.