

ROMANS 8:28-39 – Risk/Reward

Good morning church. Soo good to have you with us today as we continue our time of worship, now as we turn to the Word. I invite you to go ahead and turn/scroll/swipe whatever to Romans 8. If you're using a device, I encourage you to go to the CSB translation of the Bible so you can follow along with us, in the same translation that I'm teaching from.

Our churchwide Bible reading plan this week, brought us through the second half of the book of Romans. And I hope that you took time to read through it and consider the great truths contained in it. As I shared last week, there are a handful of verses that can kind of anchor us through the reading of the book of Romans. Well, the entire 8th chapter is the primary anchor for the book of Romans. It's incredible. And as we consider the last 12 or so verses in the 8th chapter, I want us to consider this concept of risk vs. reward.

Now, this will be our participative time in the message. We're going to play a little game called risk vs. reward. I want to know if this is a risk you're willing to take, because of the reward.

#1 – Skydiver

Now, show of hands, who says the risk is worth the reward?

#2 – Sushi – What about this one? Who says the risk is worth the reward?

#3 – Rollercoaster – Ok what about this one. Risk reward.

Last one, and probably the most dangerous thing that each of us does every single day.

#4 – Traffic – Driving a car – Risk/reward? Just depends I guess. I get in a 2-ton piece of steel, really just a projectile, and shoot down the road anywhere from 30-85mph. Hoping that I don't do anything foolish and the people around me don't do anything foolish.

Or, have you ever stopped to consider how much \$\$\$ monthly you spend on insurance?

- Medical
- Dental
- Vision
- Car
- Home
- Disability
- Life
- Long-Term Care
- PLUS Social security & Medicare

I don't think it's a stretch to say that 21st Century American life is largely consumed by minimizing risk. Entire industries, and some very lucrative professions, are centered around helping ordinary, normal, hardworking Americans minimize or eliminate risks. And the crazy thing about insurance, especially insurance, is that you pay all of this money for products you hope you never, ever have to use. But it gives us comfort, and security, and eases our fears around all of the what-if's that we face.

BUT...as a Christian, what I want us to see in God's Word this morning, is that for a Christian at your greatest possible need, your greatest source of insecurity → you are secure and provided for. **As a Christian, the reward is guaranteed!** The Reward is Christ, and the Risk, ultimately has been eliminated.

Let's read the Scriptures together – Romans 8:28-39

²⁸ We know that all things work together^[k] for the good^[l] of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.²⁹ For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

The Believer's Triumph

³¹ What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything? ³³ Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. ³⁴ Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us.

³⁵ Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

**Because of you
we are being put to death all day long;
we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.**^[m]

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

PRAY

So as we think through this text, that Jesus is our supreme reward, and the ultimately, the risk, the eternal risk hasn't just been managed it's been eliminated, we can start to see that All things really do work together for our good.

I. All things for our good

Now, when Paul tells us all things, he really means all things. All things.

- What this doesn't say is that all things are enjoyable at the time.
- What this also doesn't say is that all things will make sense for us
 - There are some things that we will never be able to explain

For those who are in Christ, who are called according to His purposes → all things will work together for your eternal good. For those he foreknew, called, predestined, justified, glorified – lots of big theological words here. And some of you may have heard me teach on these verses before. But the bottom line is that salvation is 100% of God from start to finish. That God, before the foundation of the world, chose to save a people for himself, for His glory, through Jesus.

And for all who would believe in Jesus, everything in your life is working together for your eternal good. Every second of suffering. Every second of joy. God is doing something through it to show you more and more of Jesus, to conform you to (make you more like) Jesus. Because, in Christ, God is for us.

II. God is for us

Paul launches this series of rhetorical questions. And the first, is that IF/Since God is for us, who can be against us? Of course the answer is NO ONE! Not the kid at school that's mean to you. Not the teacher at school that, once she or he finds out you're a Christian has it in for you. Not the boss who's ruthless, or the unbelieving spouse or child.

Last week, if you remember one of the things we talked about was the demonstration of God's love – That God has proven his love for us in the GIVING of Jesus.

As a Christian, if you have turned from your sin and are trusting in Jesus, God is for you in the greatest possible way. And no charge can stick.

III. No charge can stick

Re-Read V33

God, in Christ, has declared you righteous, justified. For the Christian, every single thing you have done wrong, are doing wrong, and will do wrong is paid for on the cross. And God has assigned to you the perfect righteous obedience of Jesus. It's the doctrine of imputation, where Jesus' perfect obedience is IMPUTED to you.

Satan is a master accuser. But it is God alone who justified sinners, through repentance and faith in Jesus. Satan will throw everything at you, but remember, for those in Christ nothing can stick. And there's nothing that can condemn.

IV. No condemnation

What a wonderful reminder of what Paul has already told us. Earlier in 8:1 he says "there is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

There is no condemnation for those in Christ – He paid the penalty, and he is at the right hand of God the Father making intercession for us. No priest is needed, no other type of go between. Jesus, God the Son, is there making our case. We see this same language in Hebrews 7 and again from Paul in 1 Timothy 2.

I actually looked up the word intercede – "to act or interpose on behalf of someone in difficulty or trouble, as by pleading or petition."

We weren't just in a difficult situation, we were dead in sin, but God, through faith in Christ, has given us life. And Jesus is there acting on our behalf.

V. More than Conquerors

And regardless of what may come, no one can separate us from Christ. We are more than conquerors. Paul was saying this, having been tortured, almost killed, etc. His desire was to keep at what God had called him to; and he knew that he was MORE THAN A CONQUEROR! Not a survivor, like we're in a Destiny's Child song –

just keep trying and work hard. No Way. There's a huge difference between just surviving, and being more than a conqueror.

Through Christ, we overwhelmingly conquer as the NASB puts it. Not even close. Like MJ and the 1992 dream team. Those dudes won their games by an average of over 40 points per game. They overwhelmingly conquered every single opponent in the 92 Olympics. In fact, in one of their games they were so good, in one of their games they went on a 46-1 scoring run. And would end up winning the gold medal game by 32 points. This team was so good that as long as they showed up and didn't all tear an ACL going from the bus to the court, they were going to win.

But hear me, they got nothing on us. In Christ, you and I are more than conquerors in ALL OF LIFE'S CIRCUMSTANCES. Because we are absolutely secure in Christ.

VI. Absolutely Secure

Re-read V38-39

We have to see this, we have to let this sink down deep into our hearts and minds, and then LIVE like this. Knowing we are secure. Knowing that one day, we will meet Jesus face to face and he will welcome us. Where we will spend eternity with him.

AND...let this security we have fuel our obedience today. Because everything we do involves risk, but ultimately, for the Christian there really is no risk to obedience. Yes, you may get ridiculed, you may lose out on a job, lose a friend

We can choose to live our lives, constantly trying to secure and insulate from every possible bad case scenario. And, believe me, I get it. For much of my adult life, I've dealt with a low level anxiety that sometimes ramps way up and even has led to depression at times. Told Victoria just a few weeks ago that I'm finally realizing all of the things that I've worried over for the last 20 years, none of them have ever actually happened. I get it. Believe me, I get it more than you'll ever know. But what I am learning, is that there really is nothing that can ever separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. I'm learning that God cares for me, and my problems, and my worries, even more than I do.

OR... we can choose to live our lives with a courageous, faith filled boldness. That loves people, all people, even people that hate you. That sacrificially and compassionately serves people, even at great personal risk. That boldly points people to the only hope that will ever last – the hope of the Gospel. When we see the security, the position we have as a follower of Jesus, we will see there's really no risk here, because our reward is absolutely guaranteed!

Paul got it. He knew who he was in Jesus, he knew the security that he had in Christ, and he lived that way. It was how he was able to say and to write, "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain."