

I talked to Brother Jake last night. I'm a little excited about this when we try to stay calm. I want you to turn to Romans chapter 8 with me.

Romans chapter 8. This chapter and Brother Jake will be dealing with more of this in the next chapter. When you talk about the love of God, there's... I like the way Jerry Bridges deals with it, but I want you to understand that he only scratches the surface of all that the Bible says about the love of God. Okay, so we're going to hit the high points in this little 30 minutes that I really feel like it's a shame that this has to be only 30 minutes, but we're going to see what we can do to cover this.

But I want you to start as he begins in the book, he starts with Romans chapter 8, and this lesson or this chapter is titled, knowing the love of God. He starts with chapter 8 of Romans in that crescendo, but I want you to remember where we come in the book of Romans. Okay, think about what chapter 3 says about us, who we are, where we come from, our need.

We're dead. We're haters of God. Okay, now, now, now, think about that and then think about chapter 7 where you see in Romans chapter 7 where Paul's talking about that inner struggle.

You know, when I do good, he was present with me, type kind of. Thinking, you know, and then he jumps into chapter 8, and he kind of works his way up. And I know chapter 9 is heavy, and that might be why Romans 8 ends the way it does, but I want us to look at Romans, the end of Romans 8 there.

If you would look there at verse 31, and we're going to read down to the end of the chapter. He covers 35 and 37, and this has also been used next week in brother Jake's chapter, but I want to cover this whole thing real quickly. God's everlasting love.

Spoken up here. He says in verse 31, what then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Who is to condemn? Christ is the one. Forgive me, drop fingers. Who died? More than that? Who was raised? Who is at the right hand of God? Who indeed is interceding for us? Who shall separate us from the love of God? Christ shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword, as is written.

For your sake, we are being killed all the day long. We're regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Paul says this, for I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present

nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Now, folks, just think of what he just said, how he brought us to this point. All the things that have happened in all the descriptions of prior chapters, prior verses, how needy we are.

And then Paul expresses the love of God in this Christian note, this pinnacle of this is how much he loves us. And just there's multiple phrases that you could spend a lot of time talking about. I think the question that Dr. Bridges is dealing with is looking at how do you know that God? How do you know that love and know this God that loves this way? So the title of this chapter, Knowing God's Love.

To get quickly into it, on page 132, he talks about Rabbi Kushner again. And he says, Rabbi Kushner chose to believe in a God who is good, but not sovereign. So on one hand, Rabbi Kushner says, oh, he's a good God, but he just can't do nothing about it.

Okay, that's what he's saying. He wants to do good. God wants to do the right thing, but he's powerless.

Accidents happen. Things outside of his control. But see, Dr. Bridges is already dealt with the sovereignty and we see how God is sovereign through all these things.

He says, sometimes we are tempted, if only momentarily, to believe in a sovereign God who is not good. You see, the opposite of that is what Dr. Bridges is saying, we've got to be careful. If you want to lay your stakes on a sovereign God, you also need to understand why things happen the way they do.

Satan, whose very first act towards man, was to question the goodness of God will even plant the thought in our minds that God is up in heaven, mocking us in our distress. See, a lot of people think that God is up there just having fun with us, just bouncing us around like a couple of ping pongs and just watching what we do, and he's having fun. And that's what Dr. Bridges says we have to be careful of.

He actually gives us a warning at the end of the next paragraph. In our struggle with adversity, we dare not malign the goodness of God, as Philip Hughes says, that quote, that he cares not is just as unthinkable as that he can not play on words. Right? If you think he doesn't care, that's just as much as Satan is saying, he cannot.

That's our problem. And we have to be careful as the children of God, because when something comes and slaps us in the face, something that shocks us, something that troubles us, and how do we react? Well, a lot of people want to get angry at God. In fact, most people want to shake their fist at God because they really know he's there.

Some words in there being, they know he's there because they hate him. You can't, I don't hate unicorns. I don't believe in them.

Kind of idea, right? If you don't believe in God, why do you hate him so much? Because he is real. But then when it comes to a believer and he's going through trouble, you're going to stop and think, well, okay, well, I've been told God is sovereign. I've also been told God is good.

Why is this bad stuff happening to me? Where's God's love in this? Jerry Bridges tells us that there's some things that we need to be careful of to remind ourselves in this. He talks about Ezekiel, the fact that God says, I don't even take pleasure in the judgment and the death of the wicked. He's not rejoicing in it, you guys.

That's not something that makes God happy. Could you imagine that? Do you enjoy seeing your children suffer, for example? Do you enjoy seeing the people you love and care about suffer? No, you don't enjoy that. God does not enjoy it either.

But there are times that there is suffering in life that is beneficial. There are things that we have to face in life that help us grow and help us change. And God knows just what we need.

God knows exactly what we need. And we need to be reminding each other. We need to be reminding ourselves, speaking these truths, reminding these truths, of these truths, all the time.

Look at page 133. He says, we cannot keep from being tempted. But if we are to honor God by trusting Him, we must not allow such thoughts to lodge in our minds.

As Philip Hughes again said, to question the goodness of God is, in essence, to imply that man is more concerned about goodness than is God. I could spend some time on that. But folks, well, let me just finish what he says.

Who suggests that man is kinder than God is to subvert the very nature of God. It is to deny God. And this is precisely the thrust of the temptation to question the goodness of God.

We can find ourselves in that state saying, well, I've got cancer. I've lost a child. Something bad has happened to me.

Where's God? And you begin to question and you begin to doubt how good God is. Folks, we know all kind of people. And we've been through some tough times ourselves, many of us.

And there are times that we looked and we wondered where God was. God, is this really your will? Certainly this, you're not bringing this only. And not until afterwards can we ever see the actual outcome of God's plan.

I mean, think about Joe. We talked about him often times on Wednesday night. But Joe didn't realize that there was a spiritual conflict going over outside of his knowledge.

And he was like a pawn in this event. And then things happened. Sure, he lost children.

But God blessed him too. Things turned around. And I agree there may not be any blessing

until heaven.

But folks, there's something we need to trust. And that's that God is always good. He's always good.

And yes, I don't think it angers him for us to wonder from time to time. But as Dr. Bridges said, you cannot let these things take root in your mind and in your heart. You have to be around people that are going to encourage you and help you.

You need to be in the Word of God that's going to encourage you and help you. Look at the bottom page 133. If God is perfect in his love and abundant in his goodness, how do we take a stand against our own doubts and the temptations of Satan to question the goodness of God? What truths about God that we need to store up in our hearts to use as weapons against these temptations to doubt his love? And the first one is God's love at Calvary.

There is no doubt that the most convincing evidence of God's love in all of scripture is his giving his son to die for our sins. You guys, we hit on this a little bit last week during the Q&A. It's the idea of the magnitude of the cost that God had to pay to redeem us, illustrates the magnitude of our sin.

Now think about that, a scale. Why did it take God so much to give? Because there was so much to cover. There was so much to deal with.

And you never noticed that men like to be little there sin. It's sin is not a big deal. That it's just okay.

We just keep going on. It's just a little white light. It's okay.

It ain't gonna hurt nobody. Folks, real sin costs God a real price. And we don't need to forget that.

We need to be reminded of that. And I think God's love helps put that. In 1st John, he gets 1st John 4, 9, and 10.

This is how God showed his love among us. He sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him. This is love.

Not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. That's the illustration that 1st John gives. He said that what you really want to see what love looks like? You want to know how God loves you? He sent his son.

Folks, we just read that from Romans as well. If he didn't hold his son back, what else? What other petty things will he hold back? Which Dr. Bridges deals with as well? What other things? What lesser would you think that God would hold from you if he's given the max already? Nothing else. Everything else is nothing.

And yet we call him the question or we might doubt God's love during adversity. And I'm sure everybody's here, has set in this room that there's been something going on in your life and you torment it over. You lost sleep over it.

You struggled with it. But guess what? You're sleeping the next night. Or the next night.

Why? Just the love of God, the grace of God. It would be awful if we couldn't sleep every night because of that. That would be a bad thing.

But we can torment over something. We struggle with something. We might even feel that doubt and maybe even a little anger.

I ain't going to lie to you. There's been times that I'm a little upset with God for getting me in this situation. And I'm thinking, what am I going to do? Well, the first thing I need to do is to remember the cost that Christ paid for me and the gift of the Son in redemption for me and remember that God the Father loves me.

And he demonstrated that through Jesus Christ. Look on down halfway down page 134. So when John said that God showed his love by sending his son, he was saying God showed his love by meeting our greatest need.

A need so great that no other need can even come close to it in comparison. If we want proof of God's love for us, then we must look first at the cross where God offered up his son as a sacrifice for our sins. Calvary is the one objective, absolute, irrefutable proof of God's love for us.

That's the evidence. That's why we sing about Christ. That's why we preach about Christ.

That's why we tell, preach the gospel and tell people about Christ. Because that's where our love is. The love of God is demonstrated for us.

He says, God could not remove our sins without an infinite cost to both himself and his son. And because of their great love for us, both for willing, yes, more than merely willing to pay that great cost, the Father in giving his one and only son and the son for laying down his life for us. One of the essential characteristics of love is the element of self-sacrifice and this was demonstrated for us to its ultimate in God's love at Calvary.

Now, like this next part of that chapter, consider also the miserable and wretched condition of those God loved. Paul said, but God demonstrated his love for us while we were still sinners. Christ died for us, Romans 5.8. What Paul describes us as being spiritually dead in our transgressions and sins and Ephesians 2.1. Ezekiel's vision of Israel in the valley of dry bones, Ezekiel 37, would be an app description of all of us before our salvation.

It truly is. He says, how dead is dead? How dead is dead? We talk about being dead and rotted. You know, I used to remember somebody gave an illustration about that body of this death

that he talks about in Romans.

He says, oh, who will deliver me from the body of this death? And the illustration was, if they wanted to punish someone who murdered somebody, they would strap the dead body to that person and let them go around and ask that body of that person that was tied to them would begin to rot. It would begin to rot their own. And he said, who's going to deliver me from that rotting thing that I'm a part of? Well, the answer is Christ.

The answer is Christ. That's God's love being demonstrated. We are dead.

We are rotting. We are a stench in the nostrils of God. That's what we are.

And yet he loves us. I can't stand here and explain it. All I can do is tell you over and over.

Yes, he loves us. I can't give reason. I can't give anyone merit and say, oh, God loves you because you are this or that.

Simply he loves us because he chose to. The bottom of page 135 there that last paragraph Paul continues in Ephesians 2 with his description of our wretched condition. He says, we follow the ways of this world.

That is, of the ungodly society around us. Not only did we follow the ways of the ungodly society, we even follow the devil who Paul calls the ruler of the kingdom of the air. Perhaps it was not by a conscious, deliberate choice that we followed the devil, but we did so because we were under his power and dominion.

I have to say, I think we are also by choice. It's our nature. It was what we knew.

It was them. And it was fun. And it was exciting.

But then Christ died for those. He says on page 138 that Paul had that no adversary, I think I missed something there. If we were going to come to the same heartfelt conviction that Paul had, that no adversary adversity can separate us from the love of God, we must use our minds to reason through the great truths in scripture.

Even as Paul did. We have to think about this, folks, and remember Calvary. The other thing he says that we need to keep in mind is God's family love.

He says, by God's grace, having trusted Christ as our Savior, we who our believers have been brought into the very family of God. Now, think about this, folks. It's not just that he's been called our Savior, okay? He's also brought us into his family.

There's a lot of loving words, terminology that is used to talk about the people of God in an endearing way. One of them is the most precious is to think about that you're in the family of God. You're in God's family.

Now, to an Israelite, it had been a lot of use of certain families because they had family pride and heritage and everything that they thought was back. They had been able to them and made them who they were. And that's carried over in the New Testament when you are called as sons of God, the children of God.

But then also you've got the bride of Christ. What does bride do? Come family. Marriage is family.

A lot of endearing terms, but the idea is that that love is demonstrated because we can call upon him. This father, page 138 there halfway, our Heavenly Father, God loves us, his children with a very special love, a fatherly love. He calls us his chosen people, holy and dearly beloved.

As incredible as it may seem, he will take great delight in you. We'll rejoice over you with singing. He delights in us as a father delights in his children.

That's the thing we need to remember. We're in the family of God. We have God as our Father.

At the end of that section, he says, no calamity that may come upon us, however great, it may be can carry us beyond the pale of God's fatherly love for us. And folks, I know when you're going through something, it's hard to think about these things. It's hard to reach out to God and reach out to your Heavenly Father, but that's what we have to do.

We need to be reminded by brothers and sisters in Christ. Have you ever noticed that's what he says, brothers and sisters in Christ, that we're a family? And in being a family, you are united with the Father. You are united in Christ with the Father.

Above all, you've got Christ, your mediator, before the Father. And there's nothing that come in our life that could cause a problem for a Father who loved his children. Yes, things happen in this world, in this life, but there's nothing that happens outside of God's control.

And there's nothing can be done to stop God's love from you. That's what for you. That's what Paul was saying.

Death, life, Prince of out. It doesn't matter. All of it's covered.

He gave this broad list. If you would have only mentioned one or two things in that list and almost chakra, you would have thought, well, there's what you left out there. But take it.

All of those adjectives pretty much describe a broad brush of all that God covers. And how that nothing can separate us from the love of God. A third thing he talks about is God's love in Christ.

Oh, I want to read all of that one. Let's just start at the beginning. Let's see how far I get.

This infinite measureless love of God is poured out upon us. Not because of who we are or what we are, but because we are in Christ Jesus. Note that in Romans chapter 8 verse 39, Paul says

that nothing will be able to separate us from love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The love of God flows to us entirely through or in Jesus Christ. The term in Christ is what Paul uses frequently to refer to our spiritual organic union with Jesus Christ. Jesus speaks of this same union in his metaphor of the vine and its branches in John 15.

Just as the branches are organically related to the vine in a life giving union so believers in a spiritual sense are organically united to Christ just as the parts of the body are organically related to its head. So we are spiritually related to Christ in this same way. I know he got kind of wordy there, but to me that's a very good one.

When it uses the word organically, it kind of troubles people, but organically means that you are part of. You are of the same material. It is your source or you are so connected that you see that you are sharing or receiving your source from that.

Everything that you need. If you take a limb and cut it off a tree, the limb dies. The tree keeps going.

That's the picture. It is very important that we grasp this crucial concept that God's love is to us is in Christ. Just as God's love to his son cannot change so his love to us cannot change because we are in union with the one he loves.

God's love to us can no more waver than his love to his son can waver. Let that sink in. Let that sink in.

If God could love Jesus any more or less, any less, well he could love us less. He can't change. So a lot of people have trouble with that.

I think back years ago I had a lot of problems with it too. I choked on the concept of so it's not that I have to make myself lovable. Christ makes me lovable before God.

But it's not me. It's Christ covering. It is because of Christ.

Nothing in me. Nothing I can bring. It's because of all the Christ did.

And that's why y'all catch me saying oftentimes because of Christ's perfect obedience and his perfect love for the Father. Because it's what he is doing and what he is doing, not what I have done and what I am doing. That causes God to love me.

It's all what Christ has done. We are constantly tempted to look within ourselves to seek to find some reason why God should love us. Such searching is of course usually discouraging.

Yes it is. Be careful. We usually find within ourselves reasons why we think God should not love us.

If you think highly of yourself you may come up with a reason but I guarantee you it's not a

reason. The truth is that you are rich. You're a sinner.

There ain't nothing in you that makes God love you. Such searching is also unbiblical. You see what he says there? We usually find within ourselves reasons why we think God should not love us.

Such searching is also unbiblical. The Bible is quite clear that God does not look within us for a reason to love us. Here then is another weapon.

The end of that section here then is another weapon of truth that we should store up in our hearts to use against our doubts and the temptations to question God's love. God's love to us cannot fail any more than his love to Christ can fail. We must learn to see our adversities in relation to our union with Christ.

God does not deal with us as so to seek freestanding individuals. He does deal with us individually but as individuals united in Christ. Remember God's sovereign love.

On the last section I got about two, three minutes left. He says in earlier chapters we looked extensively at the sovereignty of God over all of his universe. The sovereignty is expressed, exercised primarily for his glory.

But because you and I are in Christ Jesus, his glory and our good are linked together because we are united with Christ. Whatever is for his glory is also for our good and whatever is for our good is for his glory. I don't have time to read that again but I want to.

You realize that these things are intertwined and there are times that we don't understand that. Sometimes we struggle to see God how can this bring you glory? How can this sin, this act of sin against me or whatever, how could this bring you glory? There are some things we don't understand. I'm sure Job was asking that question.

Joseph was asking that question why he's sitting in prison. David was asking that question. You see that in the Psalms that David wrote, you kept asking that question.

How are you being glorified in this? Why Saul is chasing me and wanting to kill me. You've anointed me and I'm running like a scared rabbit in the desert. God's love is sovereign and as far as glory he knows what he's doing and we can trust him.

Look at page 141, about halfway down. We can see that it is our union with Christ that generates that guarantees that God's sovereign power is exercised on our behalf. This of course does not mean that because of our union with Christ we should not expect any adversity in this life.

The scriptures clearly teach just the opposite. It does mean that those adversities are being controlled by God and used by him only in ways that his wisdom and love dictates. I know that sounds like a cop out to you guys but he's not.

Coping out. There are people who have lived their life struggling with things that are going on and it's hurting. They're aching but at the same time they're trusting God with what's happening.

They're taking comfort because they know God is sovereign and they know God is good and that God is going to glorify himself. The question is, are you and I willing to be used for the glory of God in whatever way he chooses? You want to shake your head yes or no? Don't. Are you willing to be used of God to bring glory to him in whatever way he chooses? He knows what he's doing.

Y'all going to have to read the rest of it. Look at the end of the chapter there. Said the psalmist said, I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

The murmur against God and to question his goodness is indeed sin. We should work as diligently and trusting God's love as we do in obeying his commands. If we are going to trust God's love we must store up in our heart these great truths.

We have looked at in this chapter God's love at Calvary our union with Christ and the sovereignty of God's love exercised on our behalf. God's love is an objective truth that cannot be contradicted, but it is truth we must store away in our minds and hearts. Then we must use it in the midst of adversity to deal with our doubts, combat our accusations of Satan and glorify God by trusting him.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for these truths. We ask mercy.

Father, we can't live without you. There are times that these things try to get stirred up as we focus more on what we're going through or the trouble or even thinking within ourselves so shallowly that we deserve better. Father, forgive us.

Help us to walk worthy of the calling by which you've called us. Help us to know more and understand your love, but Father, let it not just be for our sake. May an understanding of love be shed upon all of us, and these truths be real to all of us, but not just for our sake, Father, that we can be an encouragement and a blessing to other believers and that we can share the gospel to those who are lost around us.

Father, we pray for brothers and sisters everywhere who are hurting and suffering tonight. Many would love to have these truths. Some are living every moment, every second on these truths that they've already learned.

Father, we just pray for them. Those who are hurting persecuted around the world. Just ask your will to be done.

Thank you in praise and Christ's name again.