

Thought For The Day Advent 15th December
Unshakable Faith



Romans 8:31 – end

More Than Conquerors

What, then, shall we say in response 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, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thought: Unshakable Faith

I always find the above passage a powerful one for several reasons. First, just the passage itself is powerful. I therefore would like to start by encouraging you to read over the passage again slowly and take in all that it says.

Second, I find this passage powerful because of the memories that I associate with it. In particular, two always come to mind when I read this passage. Both are from funerals; it is a common passage to be read at funerals.

The first comes from a funeral that I experienced in Moss Side, in Manchester, when I was on placement there as part of my training for ministry. It was a particularly memorable funeral for several reasons. First, because of the torrential rain that came out of nowhere, all the roads flooding in minutes, as we travelled from the church to the graveyard where the gentleman was to be buried, and for many reasons made it a trickier than a normal burial.

The funeral was also memorable as the gentleman was Jamaican, and their funeral traditions are very different from those I had previously experienced, not least because I felt that they have a lot to teach me about mourning. However, the moment that particularly comes to mind was when I read this passage to the mourners gathered in the torrential rain at the graveside and their response to the reading was one of the loudest and most definite “AMEN!” that I have ever heard. The force in it and their faith was truly inspiring. I knew none of their names but their singular “Amen” is still a moment that I find inspiring today, for they had absolute confidence in the words of this passage from Romans 8 and their faith was infectious.

The other funeral that comes to mind when I read this passage is my grandma's, as this is the reading that I choose to read at her funeral. She too had an inspiring strong faith. She had grown up in Scotland and her childhood church were extremely protestant to the point that they didn't allow music in her church as this was not

serious enough for worshiping God. Despite this start she later “softened” a bit and became a church organist, and upon moving to England joined the URC where she became an elder. Although you could always tell that she was distinctly “Scottish protestant” at heart. For her, her faith was very much her unshakable foundation and rock.

The unshakable faith of both my grandma, the mourners at the funeral in Moss side and which is also distinctly present in Romans 8 can be truly inspirational. I would therefore like to encourage you to take some time and consider:

Who has inspired you in your faith?

How can you do the same for others?

Prayer

Lord, we thank you for those who inspire us.

Help and enable us to inspire others.

So that we may all continue to grow closer to you.

Amen.

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