



Sunday, November 1, 2020

Preacher: Pastor Howard-John Wesley

Sermon Title: "I Ain't Studdin' You"

Scripture: Romans 8:31-34 (NKJV)

"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 delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."

Sermon Summary:

For the last two months, Pastor Wesley has led us in a study of Romans 8, which lifts us as a congregation to a place where we need to be as we face the uncertainties of today. We are reminded now more than ever that we who are called by God into the body of Christ Jesus are *More than Conquerors*. In the ninth installment of this Romans 8 series, we explore the shift of Paul's writing from the assurances of God's grace to a series of rhetorical questions, such as: *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Who shall bring a charge against the elect? Who can condemn us?*

Paul's rhetorical questions are an attempt to push us into a place where we can declare, "I ain't studdin' you." When we understand the assurances of God's grace that Paul has labored to teach at the beginning of Chapter 8—that the same God who's given us Jesus will give us all things, that we cannot be shamed because God has already justified us, and that nobody can say we're unworthy when Christ is making intercession for our sins—we learn to focus our attention on God. There are some people we can't let discourage us, some things we can't let distract us, some things we can't let aggravate us, and some things we have to learn to pay no mind.

Key Points:

I ain't studdin' you because:

1. God's *grace* is greater than my *against*.
2. God has justified me and that is stronger than any name you want to call me.
3. Christ who died and is resurrected is seated at the right hand of God making intercession for me.

Getting to Know You:

1. Pastor Wesley begins the sermon by listing some southern idioms that he heard growing up. What are some of your favorite ways that you are able to communicate with family, friends, or coworkers that have hidden meanings set in the context of your relationships?
2. Does this week's sermon speak specifically to anything you're going through in your life right now? How does it give you assurance, encouragement, or hope?

Into the Bible:

1. Romans 8:32 says that God, "did not spare" anything for us, not even his own Son. That is a powerful statement of love! Have you always lived into this truth? Has there been a time as a believer that you did *not* live into this truth?
2. When Paul says, "who can be against us?" Paul is not suggesting that you won't have people against you. Instead, what he is suggesting is that if they are against you, it doesn't matter. Dig deep into your bible history knowledge. Who were some notable foes in scripture? How did God deliver each person(s) from their situation? (i.e. David & Goliath).
3. If God is for us, does that mean we should sit back and wait for Him to do something? Read Joshua 11:5-9. What did God promise to do? What were the Israelites to do? Discuss the balance between trust and action.

Life Application:

1. In Romans 8:31-34, Paul uses God-centered language that focuses on confidence and assurance based in God, reminding us that God is on our side. How ought we pursue our dreams and visions then? How would you live your life, if you really believed that God was on your side?
2. Sometimes we are challenged by how "loud" the voice of our circumstances and suffering can be in this world, or the voice of naysayers and those "against" us. How can you use Romans 8:31-34 to quiet those voices? What are other healthy ways to shut out negative noise?
3. Pastor Wesley metaphorically compares a defense attorney who sits on the right hand of the judge defending your case to Christ Jesus sitting at the right hand of God advocating on your behalf. What are all the benefits we reap from Jesus as our defense attorney? What specific trouble are you currently facing that requires Jesus' attention?
4. Pastor Wesley argues that Romans 8:32 is evidence that there are no limits to what God is willing to do for us.
 - a. Has there ever been a time in your life where you have been hesitant to ask God for guidance in a particular area because you weren't sure if it was "out of bounds"?
 - b. What does a life that fully trusts God in all things look like?
5. There are many things in our lives that we expect to be secure and sometimes aren't (jobs, finances, relationships, goals, etc.). Paul illustrates that though everything else may change, God's love is truly secure and does not change. How does God's love

being so secure transform the way you move through a world that is messy with all sorts of issues in it?

Can I Push It?:

Pastor argued that a way to know that God is on our side is to position ourselves on the side of God. In this highly polarized political season, members of both political parties claim that their policy positions are on the side of God. How do you discern that you are on the side of God? What is the best way to be a witness “on the side of God” to non-believers while factions of Christians appear to be at odds with each other? What is the best way for you to interact with believers who are at odds with what you discern to be the side of God?

Activity:

Defend Your Case:

In Romans 8:34, Paul makes four statements about Jesus:

1. Christ died;
2. Christ is risen again;
3. Christ is at the right hand of God;
4. Christ maketh intercession for us;

Split into four breakout rooms and prepare a group argument defending your assigned statement and why it's the most important of the four. Have fun and be creative!

Spirit Work:

When Paul says, “What then shall we say to these things?” *These things* are the assurances of grace that are dispersed throughout Romans 8.

For each day of this week, spend at least 15 minutes with God in meditation on the assurance of the day. During your meditation ask God to reveal the veracity of each assurance through the Holy Spirit.

- Assurance 1: There is no condemnation to those in Christ.
- Assurance 2: The suffering of the present age is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.
- Assurance 3: The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness.
- Assurance 4: Christ who has risen from the dead will give life to our mortal bodies.
- Assurance 5: All things work together for the good of them that love the Lord and are called according to His purpose.

Readings for This Week:

Monday, November 2	Jeremiah 1:19
Tuesday, November 3	Matthew 6:25-33
Wednesday, November 4	Romans 5:6-10
Thursday, November 5	Psalms 118:6-14
Friday, November 6	Hebrews 8:1-2

Further Study:

Understand the origin of [African American Vernacular English \(AAVE\)](#) and the biases people have towards people who use it.