

# For I am persuaded (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Obbard, David (1922 - 2011)

[ 0 : 00 ]     The Lord help me this evening, I'd like to direct your thought to Romans chapter 8 and verse 38. Well, we'll read both those two last verses, 38 and 39.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That which is on my heart to emphasize this evening are these first four words of verse 38. For I am persuaded.

Those of you here this morning will remember that their text was that though we believe not, hereby it is faithful, he cannot deny himself. And that I came to it through the reading of the Daily Light on, I think it was Thursday, where the heading was, Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.

And the first part of the message was that we are full of unrighteousness. And that's all Paul said. I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.

[ 1 : 33 ]     And how so easily we may be so dwelling upon ourselves, and what we see in ourselves, and how we need to lift our eyes to the Saviour.

For he is faithful. We are all conscious. There are times when we do not believe, in such a way as to bring into our hearts, the blessings that God has to give.

Now, we cannot be persuaded to become a Christian. Agrippa said to Paul, For almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. But a Christian may be persuaded, a doubtful Christian may be persuaded, to have a greater confidence in God.

The Apostle Paul held those two things so clearly in his own experience, which is why I read this passage from Romans chapter 7, as he looked within, he saw what he saw within.

And yet he could say the wonder that he was, though he was a sinner, yet because he walked not after the flesh, and that doesn't mean to say that he wasn't troubled by the flesh, it is putting it this way, to have a religion after the flesh is to have a religion of works, what we may do to obtain salvation.

[ 2 : 57 ]     But to walk after the Spirit is to enter into this wonderful truth, that Christ has made us free from that law of sin and death, and I understand that to be the law of God, which brought sin and death as a reality into the hearts of the Apostle Paul, for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sent his own Son to do for us.

And Paul grasped that truth, and therefore he could write these latter parts of this chapter with that confidence, that we know, we know that all things work together for good.

We read from Timothy chapter 1, how Paul could say, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him.

He knew God. He knew God. God had revealed himself to him. He understood who God was, his faithfulness, his graciousness, and knowing God, he was persuaded.

Persuaded God was able to keep that which he committed to him. So a Christian must be born of the Spirit, and everyone that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is.

[ 4 : 18 ] But he can be persuaded to have a greater confidence in the truth that we read this evening, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nothing at all can ever separate us from the love of God.

Paul, in his preaching, presented the Scriptures to the people. We read, he went into, his custom was to go into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and alleged in the Scriptures that Christ, that is Messiah, must needs die and rise again.

He writes to the Corinthians, and he says to them, the gospel which I preached unto you, that Christ suffered for our sins according to the Scripture, and by that means, he set before them the truth.

And there were those, as we have just said, like Agrippa, who could say, well, I'm almost persuaded to be a Christian. I can see what he's getting at. And if that's true, well then, of course, I would like to be a Christian.

But that still needs the power of the Spirit to apply that. Faith comes by gift of God and through the Word of God to trust in the Lord Jesus.

[ 5 : 35 ] Abraham was justified by faith alone. But we read that he was fully persuaded that what God had promised, he was able also to perform.

And so he was quite confident that if he offered up Isaac as the Lord commanded him, that God would raise him from the dead, from which he received him as inner figure, he was persuaded of that because he also knew God.

He had experienced God's goodness to him in many ways. And out of that experience, he was persuaded. Well, to be persuaded, of course, as you would well know, is to be influenced by an argument or by some experience or some knowledge or observation.

Observation. And we are persuaded when we come to see a thing is true and we are persuaded of it. We may be persuaded to some certain course in life because it is set before us in such a way that we see the advantage of that.

And so we read of Abraham and those with him that they did not receive the promise. Abraham never received the promise and particularly, of course, the promise of the seed, the one in whom all nations should be blessed.

[ 6 : 59 ] But he embraced it and was fully persuaded by it and declared himself to be a stranger and pilgrim on the earth. So that is what it is to be persuaded.

And Paul in this passage is giving reasons why he and why we also should be persuaded of this truth. Again, we notice that as I did this morning and perhaps in different words that there are two types of Christian, well, there are two ways, rather, in which a Christian may be.

He may be in a doubting frame or he may be in a rejoicing frame. He may be in full confidence and at other times he may be troubled about it.

But though we believe not, hereby it is faithful, he cannot deny himself. And so Paul is directing our thought. I might say, we, who are the we?

Well, I would say that the we are those who do really realize what we read in Romans 7, that in me dwelleth no good thing. Nothing I can do can fulfill the law.

[ 8 : 14 ] And we do find that law in our members warring against the law of our mind. And we say with Paul, what a wretched man I am. But we also see that there is a way that God has made.

What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, it wasn't weak in itself, it was rigid. And that very rigidity of the law made it weak as a means of help.

All the law can do is condemn us. It can't bend to our need. And so it was weak. But Christ has fulfilled that law.

Come in the likeness of sinful flesh and forced sin and condemned sin in the flesh. Judged it and dealt with it and died for us that we might know the righteousness of God.

So that's the we. We who experience that. And I pointed out this morning in Psalm 73 that the wicked, there's no bands in their death.

[ 9 : 18 ] They're not troubled about the fact that after death the judgment. They can speak against God and not feel a thing about the believer that troubles him.

Unbelief troubles him. As it troubled Asaph as he saw his lack of faith he said, I was like a beast. I was so ignorant and foolish. Well so we are.

But nevertheless God is faithful. And nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Despite all our weakness and feelings.

Well now, so if I might spend just a moment to see, to remind you of what Paul is saying in this passage. the things which persuaded him and which should persuade us that nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ.

And first of all, he says, we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

[ 10 : 25 ] That God has a purpose that he's going to fulfill. And that purpose he will fulfill. And we know that all things do work together for good.

How do we know it? First of all, because God says so. There it is in the scripture. That is God's word. Those things do work together for good.

But then we may also know it because facts prove it to be so. As we look at the lives of many of the saints of old and as we often look to our own lives, we see that things do work together for good.

There's poor Jacob. Oh, he said, all these things are against me. So they were, every one of them. They were all against him. But God calls them to work together for good.

Same with Joseph, his son. Everything was against him. Sold as a slave, thrown into prison because he was honest and faithful and wouldn't commit adultery with his master's wife.

[ 11 : 26 ] Forgotten by the man who's promised to remember him to Pharaoh. All these things were against him. But they all work together for good.

And my friends, I won't enlarge upon this, but it is true. We know that it is so. And as we observe the record of believers down through the ages and the testimonies they've given, and we may prove it for ourselves.

See, persuasion isn't something that comes like salvation, which is the work of the Spirit instantaneously, the moment we believe, when the Spirit works in our hearts and brings us to repentance and faith, well that is a secret work.

And it is the work of God. The Apostle Paul, he was a sinner, he was a righteous man in his own eyes, he was a good living man, he was an upright man, he was one that feared God, and even in the way that he thought he was doing God's will.

And yet, you see, at Damascus gate, suddenly the Lord cut him down, and he became a believer. And also the message he was given, he tells us he received the gospel by inspiration from heaven.

[ 12 : 46 ] But to be persuaded means that there's been something which had influenced him to the point where he was certain, he was certain, as certain as he could be, that nothing would ever separate him from the love of God.

And so we read also that he had learned in whatsoever state he was to be content, because he knew this truth, that all things work together for good.

He learned it by having to pass through many difficulties and finding that God had met his need. So there is that thought. First of all, we have this assurance that God has a purpose that he will fulfill.

And that purpose is that he should, he has predestinated us who believe in him to be conformed to the image of his son. And God will bring that purpose about.

Nothing will prevent it. And all the work that goes on in their heart, whom he did predestinate, them he also called.

[ 13 : 54 ] They heard his voice, they heard the word of God, and it made an impression upon their heart. Like Lydia, we read, and she gave attention to the things which were spoken by Paul.

There comes a time, perhaps with some of us who were brought up under the sound of the truth, a time when instead of sitting and not taking any notice, or even rejecting the word that was preached, we began to listen and give attention.

And giving attention to that word, the Lord was pleased to use it to the quickening of our souls. On the other hand, in that same chapter in Acts, we have the jailer, and God used an earthquake.

It doesn't matter which way it is, whether God uses that earthquake experience, or whether the gentle opening of the heart, whose heart the Lord opened, like a flower.

You see a rose, and it's in tight bud, and you look at it day after day, and very gradually it opens, and if we try to open it, we only spoil it. It's imperceptible the growth, and yet it opens gently, gently, until at last it has its full glory.

[ 15 : 07 ] So it was with Lydia, and so it is with some. But it's the work of God. Such are those who are called, and whom he called, he justified, and whom he justified, he glorified.

As I said, I believe, when I was here a fortnight ago, it's all in the past tense. It's completely certain, in the eyes of God, it has been accomplished.

And so, because this great God has a purpose, that he will certainly fulfill, we know that nothing will separate us.

from the love of God in Christ Jesus, for it stems from his love. Then Paul says, what shall we then say to these things, if God be for us, who can be against us?

What a wonderful thing that is, to realize, if God be for us, who can be against us? The almighty, the all-wise, the eternal God, one who controls all things, both in the world, and in the lives of his people, and in the great plan of salvation, and in the life of the church, he is in control.

[ 16 : 20 ] If God be for us, who can be against us? Why, many may be against us. We were singing about many things that can be against us, within and without.

Yet, nevertheless, if God be for us, we should be more than conquerors. We should be more than conquerors through him that loved us, says Paul. Paul could say that.

And in many ways, we've proved it to be true. So we know. And, he worketh all things we read according to the counsel of his own will.

And he works those things, sometimes we cannot understand how it is. But I often use this simple illustration that my father was a master drafts player, or checkers as some call it.

And I never knew anyone that could beat him. And he taught us boys to play, but he would never tell us what to do. And we'd try to beat him. And we'd end up, perhaps we'd have three kings and he'd have five.

[ 17 : 31 ] And then he would say, now, if you look carefully, you can see where you can give me one for nothing, and give me another one, and take all five of mine. Now, he never influenced this anyway, but he masterminded those games so that he worked it according to his will.

And that is what God does in our lives. Yes, he works it according to the counsel of his will. This is our God. And if God be for us, who can be against us?

And then Paul says, and here's wonderful logic in verse 32, He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

See how powerfully Paul puts it by the Spirit. How shall he not do so? It isn't just saying that God will do so, or he might do so, or he could do so, but how shall he not do so?

He spared not his own son, he delivered him up for us all. How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? The love of the God that gave, and the love of the Son that came to fulfill, and the Holy Spirit's guarantee that that is so.

[ 19 : 00 ] And if we've been quickened by the Spirit, we have the guarantee of these things in our own hearts. And so that full salvation, that final perseverance, is assured, in these words, by this remarkable argument, which reminds me of the Lord Jesus and his teaching in Matthew chapter 6.

If God so clothed the flower of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Wonderful logic.

And Paul is using it, so that we might be persuaded, as he was persuaded, that despite the fact that we look within our hearts and we say, in me dwelleth no good thing, despite that fact that we can say, yes, I to the end shall endure, as sure as the earnest is given.

More happy, but not more secure, those glorified spirits in heaven. And then again, who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?

It is God that justifieth. It is God who is the judge. He is the one who justifies. It is not the accuser.

[ 20 : 22 ] Satan will accuse. Our own consciences will accuse. But God is the God who justified. It is Christ, yea rather, it is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

See how the apostle is bringing to us these tremendous truths, that as we believe them to be true, as we accept them as God's faithful word, will persuade us.

We shall be moved by it, to believe, well yes, this God who cannot change, this God who, though we believe not, yet abideth faithful, because he cannot deny himself, that we too shall be more than conquerors.

We too shall be overcomers by his grace. It is risen again. And when we find the word Christ in the New Testament, of course, it is the Greek for the Messiah.

So Paul is saying it's Messiah, the promised one. And as I've already mentioned, that he used the word of God to prove to people that Jesus is the Christ.

[ 21 : 34 ] And John wrote his gospel, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing, that we might have eternal life.

And as you think again of that wonderful passage in Isaiah 53, and there it is, we are told, about the Messiah, and how he was wounded for our transgressions.

We're told the reason for his death. All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

That was the reason why he died. And in verse 11, he shall bear their iniquities. And so he died in the sinner's place.

We are reminded of the efficacy of that sacrifice that he offered. He shall see of the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied that it has been accepted of God, that he is risen and exalted at the right hand of God.

[ 22 : 38 ] in verse 12. And we read, I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoiled with the strong. Because he poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

And so we see there how the apostle links the Messiah and his suffering foretold in the scripture, and fulfilled and recorded in the gospels as being the reason why we should be so certain that God will meet our need.

And so the apostle goes on, and he's who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine?

And here Paul is looking back over his own experience. He's passed through these things. He knows what he's talking about. He's proved that they work together for good. He knew all these things.

He had not actually suffered from the sword, but he was hanging over his head as he wrote these very words. He was already hanging over his head. Well, not as he wrote these words, but as he wrote many other words of his experience when he was in prison.

[ 24 : 00 ] And he knew that death faced him. So he's writing out of his own knowledge of how God would work. And he could say these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

While we look not at the things which are seen, all these things, the tribulation, the distresses, the sinfulness of our own heart. As we look at all these things, we see that there are but a light affliction, which is but for a moment.

And Paul had that assurance that nothing, I am persuaded, he says, not death, nor life, nothing at all could ever separate me from the love of God.

He found in those things that he passed through that the Lord was with him. They could incarcerate him in a prison. They could load him with chains. They could have a soldier beside him.

And they could do all they could to him. They could deprive him of his clothes and his books and his companions, but they could not deprive him of the presence of Christ.

[ 25 : 12 ] And there in that prison and elsewhere, in Rome and in Philippi, we see Paul rejoicing in the love of Christ. He could say, I can tell you from my own experience, in all these things we are more than conquerors.

To him that loved us. Nothing. I am persuaded then, he says, that neither death nor life. We know this this morning, we must all die.

And what a dreadful thing it is to die as an unbeliever. And we need not die as believers who are lacking in assurance. For we may be persuaded by these same truths that Paul sets before us.

we may be persuaded. I am persuaded that not death. Again, in that epistle to Timothy, the second epistle we were looking at this morning, Paul anticipates death.

He's a more than conqueror as he views it. I'm ready to be offered, he said. I have fought a good fight. I've kept the faith. I've finished my course. And henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me, and not to me only, but to all them that love is appearing.

[ 26 : 28 ] If the Lord appears to us, what a blessing. And it's something we long that he would do more often and stay longer. Forever with the Lord.

Amen. So let it be. Life from the dead is in that word. It is immortality. Here in the body pent, absent from thee I roam, but nightly pitch my moving tent, a day's march near a home.

Friends, we have a home to go to. And when my latest breath shall rend the veil in twain, through death, I shall escape from death and life eternal gain.

So this was what Paul said. And he says, death, why, that cannot separate me, it'll bring me closer. I shall be done with this body of sin and death. I shall be done with this within me that leads me astray.

This unbelief, this sinful heart. I shall be done with that. And I shall know nothing but the love of Christ forever. Wonderful to know it shed abroad in the heart just for a moment.

[ 27 : 41 ] But to contemplate what it must be to be with the Lord, forever with the Lord. Paul anticipated it with joy. He was persuaded that death could not separate him, nor life.

Again, in that second epistle of Timothy, we read that God had brought him through, and I am persuaded, he says. I know that God will deliver me, whatever lies ahead.

It's a lovely little hymn we sometimes sing at Pantons. And it says, I do not know what lies ahead. What changes I shall see, but one stands by to be my guide.

He'll show the way to me. I know who holds the future, and he'll guide me with his hand. With God, things don't just happen.

Everything by him is planned. So as I face tomorrow with its problems large and small, I trust the God of miracles, and give to him my all.

[ 28 : 50 ] Or when we can enter into that and realize that neither death nor life, nor, says Paul, principalities or powers, angels, and we wrestle against, not against flesh and blood, says Paul, but against these principalities and powers.

Not all the power of Satan, not all the temptations of his minions can ever separate us from the love of Christ. I am persuaded, said Paul, that is so.

Nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, nothing in all creation can possibly separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A debtor to mercy alone. Of covenant mercy I sing, nor fear with his righteousness on my person and offering to bring.

For the terrors of law and of God with me can have nothing to do. My Saviour's obedience and blood hide all my transgressions from view. Paul could say that. And he's writing this that we might be persuaded that we should say it too.

[ 30 : 10 ] Are we not the us? Are we not those who are conscious that sin is within us and there's no help outside of Christ? Are we not those who called upon him and his promise that all such shall be heard?

Is our only hope in Christ? Our eternal safety then is sure. So may we be persuaded that we too shall be more than conquerors through him that loved us and that nothing, nothing can ever separate us from the love of Christ.

All may know it. May we know it more fully and walk and live in the light of it to the glory of our God. Amen.

Amen. Closing hymn 441, 441 and the tune 435.

Amen. So fair a face, bedewed with tears, what beauty even in grief appears.

[ 31 : 47 ] he wept, he bled, he died for you. What more, ye saints, could Jesus do? 441.

Perred of His Spirit, He left, He let, he let, he died for you.

What for his name was Jesus true. Amen.

Upon Thou Thou Mine Thou Thou N playlist From Thou Dreams For Thou Thou Thou  
Thou Thou Who Ham rejected on my grave, my eternal night fondest taste of space,  
cheats in the soil so hard asometers.

Our gracious God, we thank thee again this evening for the gift of thy beloved Son that he  
is born our likeness tempted and tried in all points such as we are and yet without sin and  
as one says in his measure feels afresh what every member bears and so we thank thee  
for our Saviour we thank thee for thy word which will encourage us to have that same  
gracious confidence that Paul had and we pray now that bless us as we part be with us in  
the coming days and may the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the  
fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest upon us each and abide with us both now and forever  
Amen Amen Amen

[ 35 : 08 ] Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen  
Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen