

*Pastor David Anglada' Message Outline*  
*Grace Lutheran Church and School*  
*Malverne, New York*  
*www.glcas.org*  
Words of Encouragement from St. Paul  
Romans 8:26-39  
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost  
July 26, 2020

26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. 27 And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. 28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. 31 What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? 33 Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord

**Prayer of Illumination:**

Enlightening God, the unfolding of your Word gives light and provides wisdom to all who seek your truth. Open our minds and hearts by the presence of your Holy

Spirit, that the mystery of your heavenly realm is made evident here on earth.  
Amen.

My good sister and brothers, there comes a time in our lives when we need to hear a kind word of encouragement when life becomes challenging and unmanageable. Most of us would agree that life is not easy; life can become overwhelming.

In the year 57, C.E. St. Paul pens a letter to Christian house churches in Roman and reminds the follower of Jesus Christ the Messiah, that they were children of God because of their baptism in Jesus Christ. St. Paul's Good News for these disciples of Jesus was that God had their best interest at heart. Furthermore, God has provided salvation for them and that they were saved by God's grace, not of their own doing.

In our selected reading from Roman chapter 8, verses 26-39, St. Paul brings a word of encouragement to the Christians living in Rome. Being a Christian was difficult; it was not easy following Jesus as Messiah. The apostle Paul was keenly aware of the difficulties that Christians were going through who were living in Rome. Although, St. Paul did not know them personally. But he knew of their hardship caused upon them by religious fanatics and by the Roman authorities.

St. Paul encourages the Saints of God in Rome by communicating with them the following:

Before I continue, let us recall that last week in Chapter 8 of Romans, the Apostle Paul informed the Romans that they were children of God and that they had direct access to God without a middle person, furthermore, that God was their parent.

The Apostle Paul shares with them that the Holy Spirit enables the children of God to allow the present suffering, and gives them hope for what is to come. The Holy Spirit knows our weakness and yearnings intimately. Therefore, the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf.

The Spirit knows what we need to say because, at times, we are so overwhelmed with life's complicities, that we do not know how to pray as we ought too. Thus, the Spirit prays on our behalf.

Please observe St. Paul never says to the Romans that God puts a burden on them. Or that God was testing their faith. God does not need to check (test) their royalty. God already knows our hearts. Before the foundations of the earth, and before you were born, God knew you. God had you in mind.

God knows the past, our present, and our future. Since God knows the beginning and the end, God predestined us for God's Love. Moreover, God is a God of extreme love, who will go to any length on our behalf.

Many have argued that suffering is redemptive; in most cases, it is not, and Paul's writing does not support that view. God does not take pleasure in seeing you suffer. Brothers and Sister God knows and comprehends what suffering feels like. God saw Jesus suffering on the cross. God does not take delight in human suffering. God wants to save us from human misery.

If you are ill, burden, or emotionally drained, God does not cause this; we live in a broken world; life is messy. Yes, we live in a world that people hurt each other by their actions and their words. We live in a world where there is prejudice, hate, racism, homophobia, or heterosexual aggression. We live in a world where people by the thousands are food-deprived and homeless. We live in a world where people live with terminal illnesses.

We live in a world where people are emotionally and spiritually wounded. We live in a world that hates undocumented immigrants, but we love to hire them for cheap labor. But at the end of the day, God will bring healing to us. It is why we need God to support and accompany us in our daily lives. God has predestined us for goodness. God has predestined us for love.

*God is calling us to live in harmony with each other despite our differences!  
God loves humanity and wants to save us so that we live together as a gorgeous mosaic. All we can do is to give up our fears to God, and let go and let God take over our lives.*

Paul then assures the Romans and us that God is for us, who then be against us. Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Paul emphatically says no one and nothing can separate us for Christ Jesus.

Paul poses a question if God is for us, who can be against us? It is his most basic assumption: if God was willing to sacrifice Jesus on our behalf, then there is nothing to prevent God from prevailing against any other foe that confronts us.

Nothing separates us from the love of God through Christ Jesus, our Lord. Not even the Coronavirus, can separate us from Christ Jesus. Listen to the words of St. Paul: "For I am convinced 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 our Lord."

People of God, today, we have a word of encouragement; God has given us the Holy Spirit to accompany us to encourage and to help us pray; equally important, God will not allow anything to separate us from his love. Amen.

**Response to the Word:**

We give thanks, O God, for the Word proclaimed, the hymns shared, the prayers spoken. And now, as your children who have been "Called" by you, may your Holy Spirit empower us to live together as your chosen family. Amen