

DEEP SIX STUDY

April 14th, 2024

The Secret Lives of Confident People – “The Secret Life of the Loved”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS *(You can view the full message online at capecodchurch.com)*

Opening: We're in Romans chapter 8 one more time this week. Writing to a small band of Christians in the city of Rome who were feeling the growing persecution of the Emperor Nero, the Apostle Paul sends a long letter of theology and encouragement, what we now call the book of Romans. It's hard reading in places, and very deep – but chapter 8 is a beautiful master class in *confidence* – the confidence of those who are “in Christ” and know that they are eternally loved by God.

1. What Does It All Mean? (Romans 8:35-37; Psalms 44:22-23)

- At the end of chapter 8, to hammer home his point that followers of Jesus should live confident lives, Paul points to the difficulties that the Roman Christians are beginning to face because of their faith, and reminds them that “overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loves us.”
- Paul wonders, rhetorically, about what it means when bad things happen to those who love God and are loved by him. What does it mean when suffering and struggle come into our lives? Does it mean that God no longer loves us? Of course not, Paul answers. Instead, our suffering and struggle mean a couple of things:
 - a. We Live in a Broken World – God never promised that following Jesus would bring an end to our pain and struggle, because we live in a world and is broken and sinful and full of struggle. Instead, he promises to be with us, and to love us through the struggles.
 - b. My Pain Has Purpose (Colossians 1:24) – If we walk through the pain and suffering that we encounter in the world with grace and faith and hope and joy, we reflect the grace of Jesus to the lost and hurting around us and show them the effect that his love has on our lives.

2. The Security of the Loved (Romans 8:38-39; Romans 3:27-28)

- In yet another famous passage from Romans 8, Paul finishes the chapter with a flourish, reminding his readers that “nothing can ever separate us from God's love.” This truth is the basis of our eternal security – the security of the loved.
- This eternal security is built on the foundation of our *justification* in Christ – the justification that made us righteous before God. That justification is based solely on what Jesus did for us and on our decision to put our faith and trust in him – which is why “nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed *in Christ Jesus* our Lord.” If we are “in Christ Jesus,” we are eternally objects of God's love.
- Down deep, we all fear that we're not good enough – we're insecure. But the God of the universe

promises that he loves us forever, no matter what, because of our faith in what Jesus did on our behalf. That's real security – the security of the loved.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. All verses are NLT unless otherwise noted.

Psalm 16:8-11; Isaiah 54:10; John 3:16; John 10:27-29; John 16:33; Titus 3:4-7

Video of the Week: [Eternal Life](#) by the Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Do you always feel loved by God? Sometimes? Never? Explain your answer.
2. When and if you *don't* feel like you're loved by God, what is it that makes you feel that way?
3. As followers of Jesus, how should our response to the pain, struggles and suffering in our lives look different from the response of those who *don't* trust and follow him?
4. How does our response to pain, struggles and suffering (as a follower of Jesus) give "purpose" to our pain?
5. Paul tells us elsewhere that our "justification by faith" (in Jesus) gave us a right standing before God. What's your understanding of the relationship between our justification and God's love for us? Does he love us more because we've been "justified"?
6. If you had total, unwavering confidence that the God of the universe loves you like you are his own

child, what difference would that make in your life?