

# More than Conquerors

## A Sermon for Christ the King Sunday

### Based on Romans 8:31-39

“To worry is human.” Sure is true, isn’t it? I know I don’t speak for everyone, but if my life is anything like yours, then it’s a pretty safe bet to say that we human beings are worriers. We worry about everything under the sun. We worry about the economy. “Am I going to have a job a month from now? Am I going to be able to provide for my family?” Parents worry about their kids. “Are they going to fit in okay at school? Are they going to make the same mistakes I made? Are they going to be productive, happy, godly people?” All of us worry about how we come off to others. “Do people perceive me as competent? Do they think I’m intelligent, funny, or attractive?” The list of things we worry about could go on for the full twenty minutes... And we all know that we shouldn’t worry, right? But stopping ourselves is an entirely different story.

Well, instead of sitting here today and starting to worry about how much we worry, let’s take a different approach. Let’s turn our attention away from ourselves and instead look at our God, our King Jesus Christ—the only one who actually has the power to forgive and stop our worrying. And then after we’ve looked at him and his love for us for a while, let’s ask ourselves if we have any reason to worry.

Today is called “Christ the King Sunday.” It’s the day when we focus on the fact that Christ is, right now, ruling as King of all that is, seen and unseen. And it’s my prayer that you will go home today being able to better fight your worries by remembering that—that our King is a king for you! Christ is **for** you, and so through all those things that worry you, Christ has made you, as the apostle Paul says, “**more than conquerors!**”<sup>i</sup>

It’s really a beautiful, wonderful thing to think about, isn’t it? But man, it just doesn’t always seem true, does it? And the first readers of Paul’s letter might have really struggled at times to believe it as well, and even if they believed it, it would have been tough to trust it. You see, the Roman Christians who Paul was writing to lived in a remarkably godless society: sexual sins that would shock us were considered normal, watching people die was considered entertainment, and the test of a person’s loyalty to their country was whether or not they would worship the Roman emperor. That spells a pretty rough life (or death) for a Christian... And I’m sure that there were times that those Romans had trouble believing that God was really making sure that all things worked out for their good. There may have been times that those Romans struggled and thought: “More than conquerors? Really, Paul?”

And Paul recognized the difficulties that they faced. But he wasn’t willing to let these Romans become one of those plants that sprouted quickly and then had the life choked out of it by the worries of the world. So, through the Holy Spirit, he wrote what I consider to be one of the most beautiful, yet simple, encouragements in the entire Bible. “God is for you!” Paul told them. The one who created the emperors and who gave them their power was on the side of those poor Christians. And God had already proved it by giving them everything he had to give. You see, it’s a pretty simple argument that Paul was using with the Romans. He’s basically saying, “If someone doesn’t hold out on you when it’s most difficult, when it will cost them everything, even their only child—well, why in the world would you worry about whether or not that person will hold out on you in things that are far more trivial?” Paul is reminding them that God sent his son into this world on a suicide mission—to live a perfect life in the place of those Romans, and then give his life in the place of those Romans. God had already taken care of those Romans’ biggest problem: their sin and the punishment in hell they deserved for it. Their king sacrificed everything he had so that eternal, joyful life would be theirs. Why, Paul then asks, would they think that God is going to forget about them in the meantime? God was for them!

And God is for us.

But it’s pretty easy to forget that. Sometimes it’s like we’re in the crowd of Israelites at the edge of the Red Sea, before God caused it to part. Even though we’ve seen in the past that God works everything out for our good, when trouble comes, we have the memory of goldfish. Seriously, we’re like Israelites screaming out to Moses in real, heartfelt fear, “Why in the world did you bring me out here into the desert, to kill me?” We’re in that crowd because though we have seen how God fights our enemies, how he always delivers, and how he is even willing to sacrifice his own son to deliver us, when our troubles approach, we scream as if we didn’t know there was a God.

Shame on us for our fear. Shame on us for making gods out of ourselves, for worrying that if we don’t figure out clever solutions to our problems, there may not be any.

God is for us! The king is on our side. And no, we don’t deserve it. For making ourselves gods and thinking that we’re the only ones with the ability to take care of ourselves, we deserve hell. But God is for us

nonetheless. God gave us everything he had when he gave his son. He took care of our biggest problem. And he'll take care of our other problems as well.

I'm not saying life will be simple. Jesus tells Christians that their lives are not going to be easy. He promised that we would have troubles. He says that we'll have to throw our crosses upon our backs to follow him. But that doesn't stop him from also telling us that we can be truly joyful. Christians should actually be the most joyful people in the whole world, because God is for us.

But, unfortunately, "should" is the operative word. We *should* be the most joyful people in the world. We *should* look at the burdens of life and laugh because God is on our side. Yet, there is part of us that has a hard time seeing life that way, isn't there? There is a part of us that always worries—about the future of our families, about our relationships, our jobs, and even our souls. There is a part of us that still allows the guilt of the past and the fear of the future get in the way of our joy.

But it was the same for the Romans who struggled through life long before us. And that's why Paul continued his encouragement: **"If God is for us,"** he asks, **"who can be against us...?"** Paul asked the Romans, I ask you, "If God is for you, who can be against you?"

Of course, you know the answer to that. You know how that "should" make you feel. You know that you should be fearless and without worries, but at the same time, I know that there is a little part of you that wants to object that there are actually lots of things that are against us. And you're right... There are many things that fight against our faith. But Paul wasn't denying that; Paul understood that. He understood that Satan has not stopped fighting us. He knew that the devil uses guilt and regret to make people worry and even despair. And he knew that the devil doesn't make up accusations out of thin air. The devil has plenty of sins to work with. But despite all that, Paul still asks the question, **"Who can be against us?"** You see, Paul understood that despite all those things that fight against us, no one can really effectively oppose us because God is for us! The devil's accusations don't stand in God's court. Paul is saying that try as they might, no one can take away our peace. No one can overcome the God who fights for us. The accusations of our consciences and Satan do not and will not ever stand in God's court, because God, the only impartial and true judge, moved his finger from us to Jesus and said, "Guilty!" And then, through the King who gave his life for us, God turned to us and resolutely declared, "Not guilty!"

**"It is God who justifies! It is God who declares us not guilty!"** Paul writes. **"So, who is he that condemns?"**

So, my friends, say goodbye to the worries of guilt! Say goodbye to the worries of fear. And ask yourself the question that Paul asked the Romans so long ago, **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"** Go ahead and ask yourself... Will it be trouble, or maybe hardship, or what about if we, like the Romans, actually are persecuted? What about the uncertain future, or what about the devil and his demons? What about all the ways that I fail my family and my God. Is everything really going to be all right? And when you've asked yourself all that, then answer with Paul: **"No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."**

God is for you. Christ our King proved it by laying down his life for you. And so I, along with Paul, can say with absolute confidence, **"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."**

The Christian author, C.S. Lewis, once had this to say about this world: "Enemy occupied territory—that's what this world is." And in a way, he was correct. The forces in this world that would separate us from Christ are powerful. But in a way he was wrong. Those forces that oppose us aren't in control here. Christ is. And he loves you. He is for you. And he proved it by willingly dying for you. He loves you more than he loved himself. And he is coming back for you. So as you fight the good fight of faith, don't forget to smile once in a while, because even though you live in enemy occupied territory, you are more than a conqueror through him who loved you. Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> All scripture references are taken from: *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.