

REMNANT CHURCH SERMON NOTES – ROMANS 8: 35-37
PREACHED ON JULY 19, 2026, BY REV. B.B. ANUM-HIGHER

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

➤ **INTRODUCTION**

- This is our fifteenth sermon on Romans chapter 8. Last week, we saw that Paul gives every true Christian a remarkable assurance: there is no reason to fear being separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus. He listed the common sufferings believers endure—trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and the sword—and declared that none of them has the power to separate us from God's love. Though these afflictions are real and often severe, they cannot break the bond that God has established with His people through Jesus Christ.
- That assurance is especially comforting because our experience in this fallen world is so different. Human love is often fragile and changeable. Marriages that begin with solemn vows sometimes end in separation. Parents and children may become estranged. Brothers and sisters may lose affection for one another. Sin has left its mark on every human relationship. But God's love is not like ours. His love is perfect, steadfast, and unchanging. When God sets His love upon His children, He does not withdraw it. Paul is not speaking here about the strength of our love for Christ, but about the unbreakable love of Christ for us. It is the Father's love and the Son's love that preserve us to the very end.
- We have also learned throughout this chapter that suffering is not an exception to the Christian life but an expected part of it. Indeed, those who seek to live faithfully for Christ often encounter greater opposition. We cannot avoid suffering, nor can we pretend that it does not weigh heavily upon us. Trials can bring deep sorrow, physical weakness, emotional strain, and spiritual discouragement. At times, they appear overwhelming, as though they might extinguish our faith or obscure our sense of God's love.
- Yet it is precisely at that point that Paul makes one of the most triumphant declarations in all of Scripture. In verse 37, he writes, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." Notice carefully what Paul says. He does not say that we conquer after the suffering has passed, nor that we conquer by escaping our trials. Rather, in all these things—in the very midst of trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and the sword—we are more than conquerors. Our sufferings do not defeat us. They do not separate us from the love of God. They cannot rob us of our inheritance in Christ.

Instead, by God's sovereign grace, they become the very means by which He strengthens our faith, deepens our holiness, and prepares us for eternal glory.

- This truth has been impressed upon my own family. When we relocated from Connecticut to Pella, we hoped to enjoy the blessings of Christian fellowship, particularly among believers in the Reformed tradition. We desired a Christian education for our children and imagined that living in a different place would make the Christian life easier. We thought that a new location, a new church, and a new environment would somehow produce greater spiritual victory. Yet after only a year in Iowa, we discovered that we had not left the battlefield behind—we had simply entered another one. We encountered new temptations, new disappointments, new conflicts, and new spiritual dangers. We realized afresh that geography does not remove the believer's warfare. Wherever we live, we are called to discern truth from error, resist temptation, and remain faithful to Christ.
- Perhaps many of you have discovered the same lesson. You may have thought that if only you had a different job, a different church, a different neighborhood, or different circumstances, then living for Christ would become easier. But Paul teaches us not to long for another battlefield. God's providence has placed us where we are. The trials we face today are the very trials through which He intends to display His sustaining grace. It is not somewhere else, but in all these things, that Christ gives His people the victory. The battlefield God has appointed is also the place where His grace proves sufficient.
- As we consider verse 37, this morning, we will do so under three headings. First, where does the Christian find victory? Second, what does Paul mean when he says that we are "more than conquerors"? Third, what is the source of the Christian's victory?

➤ **WHERE DOES THE CHRISTIAN FIND VICTORY?**

- "37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."
- Notice first the sphere of the Christian's victory. Paul says, "In all these things." Which things? The very sufferings he has just listed: trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and the sword. Nothing painful is excluded. These are not obstacles to victory; they are the very arena in which Christ gives His people victory. How often are we tempted to think, "I cannot survive in these circumstances. I cannot serve God in this place. If only my situation were different, then I could be useful." Yet Paul says the opposite. The very place where you are tempted to despair is the place where God calls you to persevere. With that thorn in the flesh? Yes. With uncertainty about the future? Yes. With dark clouds hanging over your life? Yes. With physical weakness, personal limitations, and unanswered questions? Yes. That is the field where God calls you to labor faithfully. Everything around you may seem to proclaim, "Failure!" Yet God declares, "Victory!"

- Paul chose his words carefully. He does not say, "After all these things," as though victory comes only when the trial has ended and become a distant memory. Nor does he say, "Apart from all these things," as though suffering must first disappear before Christians can triumph. He does not even say, "In spite of all these things," merely surviving them. He says, "In all these things." It is in the midst of suffering, while we are enduring it, and even through it, that we are "more than conquerors." The very experiences that appear to threaten us become the means by which God displays His sustaining grace.
- Paul's point is that Christian victory is not dependent upon ideal circumstances. If it were, who could ever hope to overcome? Wherever God has placed us today, however difficult our circumstances may be, and whatever trials await us tomorrow, we may overcome because Christ is with us. Nothing lies outside the scope of these words. The sense is not merely that we shall conquer one day, after the battle has ended. Rather, we are more than conquering even now. The victory is not reserved for the celebration after the war; it is experienced in the conflict itself. Conquering belongs to the battlefield, not the victory parade. It assumes fierce opposition, painful wounds, exhausting struggle, and determined perseverance. Yet even there, Christ gives His people victory.
- This raises an important question. Does suffering automatically make a Christian more holy? The answer is no. Suffering itself does not sanctify. Pain alone never transforms the heart. The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that God's discipline yields "the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." The blessing comes not merely through suffering, but through suffering received in faith. Consider Paul's own "thorn in the flesh." He did not ignore it or treat it as meaningless. He brought it before the Lord in prayer. He sought to understand God's purpose in it, and he learned that it was there to humble him and that God's grace was sufficient and that Christ's power is made perfect in weakness. Only then could Paul say, "When I am weak, then I am strong."
- The same principle applies to us. We profit from suffering when we receive it as coming under God's wise providence and seek to learn what He intends to teach us through it. Romans 8:28 has already assured us that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Every providence has meaning. Pleasant experiences encourage us and remind us of God's kindness. Painful experiences humble us, expose our weaknesses, deepen our dependence upon Christ, and produce perseverance and spiritual maturity.
- Receiving God's discipline is not always easy. Pain can so occupy our thoughts that we neglect the very duties God still calls us to perform. We may become discouraged, ineffective, or even resentful. Like the psalmist in Psalm 44, we may cry out in confusion and wonder why God seems distant. We may compare ourselves with those whose lives appear easier and begin to envy them or question God's wisdom. Such responses rob us of the comfort God intends to

give through our trials. So we must ask ourselves: "How do we respond to suffering?"

- We admire the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. We gladly study the lives of the prophets, the apostles, and the Reformers. We appreciate the theology of Luther and Calvin and rightly thank God for their faithful witness. Yet it is possible to admire their courage without sharing their willingness to suffer for Christ. We may cherish the doctrines for which they suffered while shrinking from the cost of living those doctrines faithfully. Here in Pella, many rightly value biblical preaching, Christian education, catechetical instruction, and the rich heritage of the Reformation. These are precious gifts from God, and we should thank Him for them. But knowledge alone is not enough. Scripture repeatedly calls us not merely to hear the Word but to do it. There is always a danger that we become satisfied with theological understanding while remaining hesitant to obey Christ wherever obedience becomes costly. The Lord does not call His people to a comfortable profession of faith but to wholehearted discipleship.
- Christ calls us to follow Him without compromise. That means loving others sacrificially, proclaiming the gospel courageously, serving faithfully, forgiving generously, and enduring suffering patiently whenever faithfulness requires it. We are called to seek the ongoing reformation of Christ's church, to move beyond our comfort, and to bring the light of the gospel into places where darkness still reigns. Such obedience may bring misunderstanding, opposition, or persecution. Yet this is precisely where Paul says our victory is found. There is no victory without conflict. Soldiers do not conquer by remaining safely behind the lines. But for those who take up their cross and follow Christ, opportunities to overcome surround them every day. And because our victory rests not upon our own strength but through Him who loved us, every battle becomes another occasion for the triumph of His grace.

➤ **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE MORE THAN CONQUEROR?**

- What hope does the Christian have in the face of suffering and overwhelming pressure? Paul's answer is astonishing: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." The expression "more than conquerors" speaks of complete, overwhelming, and decisive victory. The trials that come upon us do not ultimately defeat us or even frustrate God's purpose for our lives. Instead, by God's sovereign grace, we overcome them. Indeed, they become instruments for our good. A conqueror defeats his enemy, but one who is more than a conqueror goes even further: he turns his enemy into a servant and makes it advance his own cause.
- The apostle Paul himself is the clearest illustration of this truth. Once, he was Saul of Tarsus, the bitter persecutor of Christ and His church. The risen Lord met him on the road to Damascus. Christ could simply have judged Saul and ended his life. That would have been a victory. But Christ accomplished something far

greater. He transformed His enemy into His devoted servant. The man determined to destroy the church became its greatest missionary, theologian, and apostle. For the rest of his life, Paul's ministry proclaimed the triumph of Christ's grace. Jesus was not merely a conqueror over Saul—He was more than a conqueror. The same principle applies to the sufferings of every Christian. Our trials do not merely fail to destroy us; God uses them to strengthen us. They deepen our faith, humble our pride, refine our character, and increase our dependence upon Christ. What Satan intends for our harm, God turns into an instrument of blessing. What appears to be a curse becomes, by God's providence, a means of grace.

- This truth must be understood carefully. Paul is not saying that suffering is good in itself. Pain, disease, persecution, and death are not blessings. They entered the world because of sin. Death remains "the last enemy" (1 Corinthians 15:26), not our friend. Our Lord Himself stood at Lazarus's tomb, wept over death's terrible reality, and was deeply moved with holy indignation at the devastation sin had brought into His creation. Nor does Paul minimize suffering. When he speaks of trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and the sword, he is describing realities he had personally endured. He had been beaten, imprisoned, stoned, shipwrecked, hungry, and constantly exposed to danger. By the time he wrote these words, only "the sword" still awaited him, a prophecy fulfilled when he was eventually executed for the sake of Christ. No one understood better than Paul how painful the Christian life could be.
- Yet Paul also understood something even greater: God overrules every suffering endured by His children. None of it is wasted. The Lord takes what is painful and brings lasting spiritual good from it. Earlier in this letter, Paul wrote, "We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame" (Romans 5:3–5). God ordains a gracious chain of blessings through affliction. What Satan intends to weaken, God uses to strengthen. What appears to hinder our progress becomes the very means by which Christ advances His work in us.
- History repeatedly demonstrates this truth. Times of persecution have often purified the church, exposed nominal faith, strengthened genuine believers, and opened unexpected doors for the spread of the gospel. Opposition has never succeeded in destroying Christ's church. Instead, the Lord has frequently used persecution to display the power of His grace and the steadfastness of His people. The kingdom of Christ has continued to advance because no earthly power can overthrow the purposes of God. The same is true in our own lives. Many of us can look back upon our greatest trials and confess that they became seasons of profound spiritual growth. Affliction taught us lessons that prosperity never could. Our faith was strengthened. Our priorities were reordered. Our love for the world diminished. Our longing for heaven increased. Like the psalmist, we

can say, "I know, O Lord, that your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me" (Psalm 119:75).

- In this way, suffering often becomes one of God's chief remedies for our unbelief and self-reliance. It strips away our confidence in ourselves and teaches us to rest more completely in Christ. Therefore, Christians need not fear the path of costly obedience. The promise of Romans 8:37 frees us from seeking an easy Christianity. The road of faithful discipleship may involve sacrifice, rejection, and persecution, but it is also the road on which Christ displays His victorious grace. The victories of faith frequently look like defeats to the world. The heroes of Hebrews 11 were mocked, imprisoned, tortured, and in many cases put to death. To outward appearance, they seemed to lose everything. Yet by faith they conquered kingdoms, obtained promises, and received God's commendation. Their victory was real, though often hidden, and its fullness awaits the day Christ returns.
- This is our confidence. No trial can touch us apart from the wise and loving providence of our heavenly Father. No believer for whom Christ died will ever be lost. Nothing in all creation can frustrate the building of Christ's church or hinder the advance of His kingdom. The God who "works all things according to the counsel of his will" (Ephesians 1:11) is directing every event for His glory and the good of His people. Therefore, even in the darkest hour, the Christian may say with confidence: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

➤ **THE SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN VICTORY**

- The source of the Christian's victory is not found within ourselves but in Jesus Christ. Paul says, "Through Him who loved us." Apart from Christ, all talk of conquering would be empty boasting. Left to ourselves, we would be overcome by temptation, fear, and suffering. But united to Christ, our victory is certain because His strength, not ours, sustains us. The immediate context of this passage is Christ's love for His suffering people. He enables us to overcome because He is present with us. Our Lord promised, "I am with you always." That promise belongs to every believer, yet Scripture repeatedly shows that Christ draws especially near to His people in seasons of trial.
- A loving mother cares for all her children, yet when one of them is seriously ill, her attention is naturally drawn toward that child. She does not love the others less, but she gives special care where special needs exist. In a far greater way, our Savior has a tender compassion for His suffering people. He loves all His children perfectly, yet He graciously manifests His presence and comfort in particular ways to those who walk through deep waters.
- Our risen Lord possesses "all authority in heaven and on earth." With a single word He could remove every trial, silence every enemy, and end every sorrow. Yet He often chooses not to do so because our afflictions are not accidents but

part of His wise and loving providence. If Christ ordains the trials through which we must pass, will He not also sustain us in them? His heart is full of compassion toward His people. He continually supplies the grace, strength, and comfort they need. Throughout the history of the church, believers have testified that Christ's presence has often been sweetest in their darkest hours. When earthly supports fail, they discover that Christ Himself is sufficient. Thus, they become "more than conquerors through him."

- But Paul points us to something even deeper than Christ's present help. He describes our Savior as "Him who loved us." The Greek verb points to one supreme moment in the past when Christ's love was extended in a uniquely significant way. That moment was at Calvary, Jesus' particular atonement for his people. Christ has loved His people from all eternity and will love them forever, yet the supreme manifestation of that eternal love was His willing sacrifice for His own.
- Our Lord Himself declared, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." Likewise, Paul writes in Galatians, "The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me." Whenever Paul speaks of Christ's love, his mind returns to Calvary. There, outside Jerusalem, the Son of God bore the curse of sin in the place of His people. There, divine love shone with unparalleled brightness.
- Here is the foundation of our confidence. At the cross, Christ bore the full penalty for the sins of His people. He satisfied the justice of God, removed our condemnation, broke the power of death, and by His resurrection secured everlasting life for all who belong to Him. More than that, at Calvary Christ turned what appeared to be His greatest defeat into His greatest victory. To human eyes, the cross looked like the triumph of evil. The Son of God hung rejected, mocked, and crucified. Satan seemed to have won. Yet God was accomplishing His eternal purpose through those very events. Every insult, every wound, every act of hatred was overruled to accomplish the redemption of God's elect. The cross was not a tragic defeat but the greatest victory in history. There Christ conquered sin, Satan, death, and hell by submitting Himself to death in the place of sinners.
- My family visited the Ark Encounter in Kentucky and Crystal Cave in Ohio last May. Like many travelers, we brought home a few souvenirs. A souvenir serves one purpose: it reminds us of something important that we have seen or experienced. Our Lord has also given His church a memorial. He did not leave us a reminder of Bethlehem or of His earthly miracles or even of His heavenly glory. Instead, He gave us bread and the cup. These simple elements direct our hearts to His broken body and His shed blood. Whenever we gather at the Lord's Table, Christ says to His people, "Remember Me." Above all, remember My sacrificial death. For it was there that your salvation was accomplished, your sins were atoned for, and your victory was secured. We are "more than conquerors through him who loved us."

- The path our Savior walked is also the path His disciples must walk. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." The Christian life is not a promise of ease but a call to faithful discipleship. Those whom God adopts into His family should expect hardship, self-denial, and many kinds of affliction. Yet none of this should discourage us. Because Christ has already walked this road before us, suffering no longer has the final word. Since Calvary, we can look at suffering without fear and confront all that Satan can do without being shaken in our faith. Why? Because Jesus Christ has been there before us. He is the source of our victory, and for it he receives all the praise. He is our confidence.

➤ CONCLUSION

- Earlier in this chapter, Paul taught us that if we suffer with Christ, we shall also be glorified with Him. That raises an important question for each of us this morning: Does that describe your Christian life? Are you following Christ in a way that costs you something? Are you engaged in the spiritual battle to which every believer is called? Is there anything in your obedience to Christ that exposes you to misunderstanding, opposition, or sacrifice? When was the last time you found yourself depending upon the Lord because following Him required courage rather than comfort?
- There is a danger that we reduce the Christian conflict to our private struggle against temptation and indwelling sin. That struggle is real and essential. Our Lord calls us to deal radically with sin, putting it to death without compromise. Such warfare is painful, demanding, and lifelong. Yet the battle to which Christ calls us is not merely inward. It also extends outward as we confess His name, proclaim His gospel, serve His people, and bear faithful witness in a world that is often hostile to Him.
- The sufferings Paul lists—trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and the sword—were not simply the hardships of being human. They were the hardships of being faithful to Christ. Paul endured them because he preached the gospel without compromise. They were, as it were, the occupational hazards of a soldier of Jesus Christ. He willingly surrendered earthly privilege, comfort, and security because Christ was worth more than all the world could offer.
- Nor did Paul think his experience was unique. He understood these sufferings to be the ordinary pattern of Christian discipleship. Our Lord sent His disciples out as "lambs in the midst of wolves," teaching them to depend entirely upon the care of their Shepherd. Paul also quotes Psalm 44: "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." Such opposition has marked the church throughout history. Christ has never promised His people an easy path. Rather, He calls them to take up their cross daily and

follow Him, enduring reproach for His name with the assurance that great is their reward in heaven.

- Yet this is not a message of defeat. It is a message of triumph. Even while the church is opposed, misunderstood, and at times persecuted, Paul declares, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." The battlefield is not evidence that Christ has abandoned His people; it is the very place where His sustaining love is displayed most clearly. Though the world may regard believers as weak, defeated, or insignificant, Christ declares them victorious. Through His unfailing love, every trial becomes another testimony to the triumph of His grace, and every faithful act of endurance proclaims that the kingdom of God cannot be overcome.