**Easter Sunday**

**The Word**

Read together Romans 8:31-39

**The Big Idea**

The reality of the resurrection gives us a series of hopeful questions that we can take into every circumstance of our lives. Through the resurrection we can be more than conquerors no matter what life throws our way.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Romans 8:18-30 talks a lot about the “groaning” we experience as fallen people living in a fallen world. Where are you currently experiencing the groan?

2. On Sunday it was argued that because of Christ’s unfailing love, things in life can hurt us but they can’t harm us. Discuss the distinction between those two words and whether you agree with that statement and what conditions or clarifications you’d add to that statement.

3. Take some time to consider the four questions Paul asks in Romans 8:31-39. Which question do you most need to hear at this time, and why?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

A. The context of Romans 8 (and our lives) is suffering and groaning

B. So much of life is about the perspective we bring to our trials and specifically the questions we’re asking in the midst of our trials

1. We often ask the “what if” question

2. And it often leaves us full of fear and anxiety

 C. Paul gives us a series of counterquestions shaped by the reality of the resurrection

1. These questions aren’t actually “what if” hypothetical questions but are grounded in rock solid reality

 2. These questions fill us with hope and confidence

II. Question 1: “If God is for us, who can be against us?’ (v. 31)

A. Many things can be against us, but if the sovereign, all-powerful God is for us, nothing can defeat his purposes

B. Verses 28-30 define what it means for God to be for us

1. His plan from eternity past is to transform us into the image of Jesus so that we too are resurrected, perfected, and purified for all eternity

2. He is working in “all things” (every circumstance of our lives), and weaving them together to bring about that ultimate plan for our redemption.

3. He’s like an artist who can take scrap metal, and discarded things, and turn them into a beautiful work of art

C. What if in every circumstance, you trusted that underneath/behind the scenes a sovereign hand was working for your ultimate good?

 D. It’s like watching a sporting event already knowing the winning outcome.

III. Question 2: “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also along with him, graciously give us all things?” (v. 32)

A. This is an argument from the greater to the lesser.

1. For example, imagine a guitar connoisseur giving you his most treasured guitar. Surely, he would give you a pick along with the guitar.

2. God has given us his most treasured possession: his only Son.

3. Surely he will give us “all things”

a. “All things” could refer to the new heavens and new earth where all things will truly be ours

b. “All things” could also refer to everything we need on the way to that destination.

 B. God’s generosity in the past is meant to spark hope in his generosity in the future

1. So often we acknowledge God’s gracious generosity in the past, but we look to the future with a scarcity mindset. We think the river of grace and generosity is going to run dry.

2. But what if we let the extravagant gift of God’s son in past shape our expectation for his generosity in the future?

3. Consider Psalm 23:6: “Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life”

IV. Question 3: “Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns?” (v. 33-34)

A. Many of us experience voices of condemnation (parents, peers, inner voices, Satan’s voices of accusation), and these voices impact how we live.

B. But God has justified us

1. He took every charge, every accusation and laid it on his son on the cross. Jesus paid the penalty of death for those charges on our behalf.

 2. “There is now no condemnation” (Romans 8:1)

 3. This is entirely God’s doing and doesn’t depend on our performance at all

C. Therefore, those other voices have lost their power

1. Consider a gymnastic competition where spectators speculate on the score of the athlete

2. But there’s only one Judge whose score matters: the judge

3. We have already received a perfect 10, not based on our performance but Jesus’ performance.

 4. So we don’t live for a score, we live from a score.

V. Question 4: “Who shall separate us from the love of God in Christ?” (v. 35-39)

A. The context is terrible and dangerous things

1. Consider the list in v. 35

2. Consider the quote of Psalm 44:22 in v. 36

B. But Jesus is our shepherd and nothing can snatch us from his hand (John 10:14, 28)

 1. His love will hold us fast through everything

2. That means that things in life can hurt us, but they can’t ultimately harm us.

3. Our safety in his love is not dependent on the strength of our faith but the strength of his faithfulness

Consider a parent and child walking the tidepools. The safety of the child is not dependent on their grip on the parent but the parent’s grip on them.