**Romans 8:33-34**

I. Who will bring any charge against us? Who is it that condemns?

A. What are the sources of accusation and condemnation in your life?

 1. External: work, family, culture, etc.

 2. Satan (see Reve 12:10)

 3. Internal: We are often our own worst critics

B. What are the accusing and condemning messages you live with in your heart?

Examples: you’re not enough, you’re dirty/sinful/guilty, you’re a failure, you’re stupid, you’re ugly, you’re broken, you’re unlovable, you’re uninteresting

C. When often live our lives from those accusations

1. Sometimes we try to fight against those voices

a. We try to compensate in other ways to justify our lives and prove to ourselves and the world that we really are lovable, enough, beautiful, etc.

b. This attempt to justify ourselves can lead to some impressive behaviors (success at work, beautiful bodies, service in the community, etc.) but it is often driven by a performance-based model for living that does not lead to freedom.

2. Sometimes we give in to the voices

a. We let them define who we are and we think we are fundamentally

b. So the insecurity keeps us from stepping out and taking risks and loving well in life

II. God has chosen you and justified you

A. Paul is envisioning a courtroom scene. God, the judge, who has all the evidence he needs to convict you has justified you.

1. Justify = to declare you not guilty, free and clear of all accusation, in right standing with him (Romans 8:1: there is now no condemnation)

 2. And if God has justified you, no one else’s accusations mean anything

B. Practically speaking, that means that those accusing and condemning voices we experience in our hearts are not coming from God. God’s declaration is that we are his beloved children.

III. Paul gives concrete, historical evidence that demonstrates our right standing with God (v. 34)

A. The death of Christ (v. 34)

1. Jesus died for our sins (Romans 4:25)

2. The record of accusations against us was nailed to the cross and Jesus served the sentence for our crimes (Colossians 2:14)

3. It’s not that God overlooks our crimes, it’s that he has already dealt with them on the cross. The sentence has already been served!

B. The resurrection of Christ (v. 34)

1. Jesus was raised for our justification (Romans 4:25)

2. God raising Jesus is his way of showing us that Christ’s death was sufficient, that God accepts what Christ did as fully satisfying everything needed for our forgiveness

C. The ascension of Christ (v. 34)

1. Christ is now in God’s immediate presence and he serves as our advocate and he intercedes for us to guarantee our eternal forgiveness and justification in God’s sight (see 1 John 2:1, Hebrews 7:24-25)

2. God will surely listen to the voice of his Son over any other voices that might bring accusations against us

D. So rather than just leaving it to wishful thinking about what God is like, we are encouraged to look at these three historical realities (death, resurrection, and ascension) to find absolute confidence that we are fully forgiven and in good standing with God

IV. We played absolutely no part in those historical events

A. God did everything to secure our justification. He did everything needed so that he could look at us without any accusation but with only love and approval

B. “It’s only in the gospel that you get the verdict before the performance. Every other religion requires performance before the verdict.” -Tim Keller

 C. So our role is to simply trust in what God did for us

1. See Romans 4:4-5

2. We don’t work at all for our justification. Rather we trust in God who works on our behalf and justifies the wicked.

Conclusion

I. Where do you need to be loved and consoled?

Consider the younger brother in the parable of the prodigal son who just needed to experience his Father’s loving and gracious embrace

II. Where do you need to be confronted?

Consider the older brother in the parable who thought he had to work for his father’s approval and couldn’t handle the free grace given to his younger brother. Is there a stubborn part of you that says, “I know God forgives me but I can’t forgive myself.” Who do you think you are to reject what God has done?

**Discussion Questions**

1. On Sunday, we talked a lot about the voices of accusation we experience: both the source of those voices and the messages of those voices. If you are willing, share how you experience those accusations in your own life. What is the specific negative message you sometimes hear in your own heart?

2. On Sunday it was argued that those condemning voices we experience inside do not come from God. How do we discern when we’re experiencing a godly conviction of sin and when we are experiencing a condemning voice from someone else?

3. “Justification” is a very religious and overly-familiar word for many of us. Was there anything from Sunday’s message that was new to you or that helped you understand that concept of justification in a deeper way?

4. Consider the 3 historical events that prove our forgiveness and justification (the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus). Which of those stuck out to you most? Which was most helpful for you to consider and why?

5. What did you need to hear most from Sunday’s message, and what do you want to take with you in terms of how you live your life in the coming weeks?