**Romans 8:34-39**

I. There is a basic truth: God wants to be with you (this is true whether we feel it or not)

A. *The Unifying Themes of the Bible* by Nelson Baker

1. God wants to be with you

We see this in the garden, tabernacle, temple, Jesus, Holy Spirit

2. He wants to give us something: life/inheritance now and forever

3. We continue to walk away from this

4. He continues to offer them to us

B. Everyone wants to know this: Do we belong? We were made for relationship with God and others.

II. What is your “unconscious theology?”

A. It’s not just a matter of believing the right truths intellectually, it’s about how we image/imagine reality. Our unconscious theology is rooted in the constellation of images we carry with us, and these are the images that we tend to run on day-to-day.

B. In Romans 8, Paul is helping us imagine reality rightly. He uses a series of metaphors and images to remind us that we are not separate from God’s love now.

III. Consider these images that demonstrate God’s love for us and desire to be with us

A. Image of a courtroom: God dismisses all accusations against us (v. 33-34)

B. Image of adoption (v. 15-16). The criminal court has now become an adoption court! We can call God “Abba” (= “Daddy”: term of intimacy and affection)

C. Image of co-heirs with Christ (v. 17). Example: The Downton Abbey character, Branson, who started as a chauffeur and through marriage receives the full rights of being part of the family. What Christ has by nature (full family rights) we receive by grace. We are now brothers and sisters with Christ and will receive all the privileges he receives from the father.

D. God has sent his Spirit inside us so that he can be with us and we can be with him (from the inside out). We have a mutual indwelling: Christ is “in us” and we are “in Christ” (see Rom 6:3 and 1 Cor 1:29-31). This is hard for us to grasp as 21st century materialists. Consider the analogy of citizenship: we belong to that country (Phil 3:20). Eph 2:5: we are seated with Christ in the heavenly places.

IV. Remember that we are in Christ no matter how challenging life is

A. Paul lists many life challenges (v. 35-36)

B. But none of these challenges can negate God’s love

C. So we are more than conquerors in all these trials (v. 37)

D. Each trial can be an opportunity to dive more deeply into what is true about God’s love for us

V. This is not just a truth for us but for others

When others are going through suffering we have an opportunity to pray for and encourage them along the lines of Romans 8

**Discussion Questions**

1. On Sunday it was argued that our intellectual answers to theological questions are often different from our “unconscious theology” which is composed of the underlying images we carry with us every day that shape how we actually live. Do you agree with this, and if so how have you seen this play out in your own life or in the lives of others?

2. Consider the basic point argued on Sunday: God wants to be with you. Historically, have you have a hard time truly believing that or not?

3. On Sunday we walked through various images that reveal God’s desire to be with us: adopting us, making us co-heirs with Christ, giving us his Spirit, and placing us “in Christ” (See Point III above). Which of those images was most helpful/impactful for you and why? What questions did those images raise in your mind?

4. Looking back on this series in Romans 8, what has been the most impactful idea that you want to remember and take with you moving forward in the coming months?