It is Written: Week 4 – Romans 8:38-39

**Special announcement:**
I wrote a devotional for the church to go through together this summer. It begins with an essay on how we have lost the ability to see and understand beauty and concludes with a deeper understanding of beauty and the power of pursuing it. Following this, we engage in a 40-day devotional, reflecting on the lives of remarkable church fathers and mothers throughout history, recognizing that God is the source of all beauty and satisfaction.

I’m excited for you to read this. I can’t express how much spiritual warfare accompanied the writing of this. The easiest way for me to get it to you is through Amazon. If you can’t afford this, please let me know, and I’ll personally ensure you receive a copy.

You can take a picture of the link on the screen.

**Introduction:**

When I was in middle school I was at a youth camp with my church. Our “house” decided to go shower and get ready for the evening dinner and worship service. While in the shower I realized it was all of the sudden very quiet. When I finished and pushed back the curtain I realized those dorks took all my clothes and left. I was literally completely naked with no way to get back to the dorm. Talk about feeling totally abandoned. I ended up wrapping myself in paper towels and running as fast as I could back to the room. Needless to say, revenge was taken and these guys really are some of my best friends to this day.

In all seriousness though…

There comes a moment in every friendship when you realize its true nature. Is it merely a business transaction—“As long as you are good for me, I’m with you”? Or is it genuine charity—“I’m with you even when it’s not good for me”?

Many of you know this feeling.

We have all had friends who disappeared the moment the relationship no longer benefited them. After being let down by such friendships repeatedly, it’s natural to begin to guard your heart.

Words like loyal, genuine, authentic, and faithful start to resonate with you as you think about future friendships. Yet, in your quest to avoid further pain, you might find yourself becoming less and less of these very qualities, shaped by the wounds of your past.

Our past relational disappointments understandably make us more reserved. Yet, at the same time, we long to be with people who are unreservedly open and committed to us.

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We want to receive a love we have lost the courage to offer.

 Let’s go to the context of the memory verse for this week.

**Lectio:**

Romans 8:31-39 (ESV): God’s Everlasting Love (Memory verse is 38-39)

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Meditatio:**

* Paul, in the preceding chapters, addresses the themes of sin, salvation, and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit.

* What is being transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit? We are.
* The Holy Spirit gives us a new tender heart (Ez 11:19-20), a clear mind (Rom. 12:2), and spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12) to help us participate in deep unity with God and others (Eph. 4).
* All our brokenness and wounding will be healed not by our work, but by immersing ourselves in the work and ways of Jesus (Jn. 15) and by focusing deeply on Him (Heb. 12).

**Final Thoughts:**

What we are looking at matters a lot. It is true that we as believers are supposed to be the tangible love of Jesus in the world.

However…

If we don’t point people to the pinnacle of love, Jesus, we will set them up for great relational disappointment. Not only with us, but with others too.

Ok, so what does this look like Pastor Mike?

We are all to be amazed by the love of Jesus and His work in people. To place our amazement in the love of people alone will let you down. Use me as an example. If you are looking to me as the perfect embodiment of love, I will let you down. Instead look at me and think, “Holy cow, the love of God can make even that guy a dad who loves his kids and a pastor who loves the local church.”

Don’t be amazed at my love. Be amazed at what His love is doing in me.

For all of us, life in the Spirit is making us heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:12-17), leading us to a future glory (Rom. 8:18-30) and immersing us ever further into God’s everlasting love (Rom. 8:31-38).

See it all hangs on this one thought. Love itself has the final word and it will be aimed at you too.

I had to end this idea with a poem God put on my heart.

**Love has the final word. (Romans 8:38-39)**

Love has the final word.

Over your past failures and future fears.

Love has the final word.

Over your hurt from others that has caused you tears.

Love has the final word.

Over the lies you constantly hear.

Love has the final word.

Jesus will draw you near.

Love has the final word.

And the telos of all creation cheers...

That love has the final word.

Let’s run through this one more time all together but replace “you(r)” with “my(I)”.

Love has the final word.

Over my past failures and future fears.

Love has the final word.

Over the hurt from others that has caused me tears.

Love has the final word.

Over the lies I constantly hear.

Love has the final word.

Jesus will draw me near.

Love has the final word.

And the telos of all creation cheers...

That love has the final word.

**Actio:**

Pull out the next steps card and write out what you can’t wait for love to have the final word over in your life.