

“No Separation”

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Redeemer Lutheran Church

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Romans 8:28-39

An author by the name of Mel Folkerstma has an intriguing idea about the created purpose of mankind. In his book titled, *Christian Essentials* he explains how all people are created to be in relationships. We are created to be social creatures, talking and listening to form bonds with other people. There are four major relationships that encompass our lives: 1. our Relationship with God, 2. our relationship with Society, 3. our relationship with creation, and 4. relationship to the self.

We know in Genesis Adam talked and walked with God. Then God saw that it was not good for Adam to be alone, so he created Eve for him. They were the first friends, they were the first married couple, and they would become the first parents. Relationships are a product of two people interacting with each other. But things didn't stay intact very long. They took the fruit of the forbidden tree and ate it. They disobeyed God and sin tainted all of creation as a result of their rebellion.

Their relationship with God was broken. Their relationship with each other twisted. When God questions Adam about their fall, he quickly blamed Eve his wife. “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” Adam is blames God and Eve for his sin, anyone but himself.

And now since the Fall of our ancestors Adam and Eve, we still have this yearning in the essence of beings to form relationships, but now we sin, we tear apart and break those relationships we cherish the most. We live in a fallen world chasing after what should have been.

Instead of peace around the world there are battles and wars. Instead of caring and support in families across our nation there is discord and heartbreak. Instead of people valuing themselves just for who they are, people cut and hurt themselves because they hate themselves. So many people are wounded from the brokenness of human nature and the loss of cherished relationships. This brokenness is even evident in our mistreatment of the environment, instead of caring for it we have been exploiting it.

Now instead of mankind walking with God, people spit in his face and claim that he doesn't exist, God is just some figment in the human mind. *Some people are even so bold to think that God is a mere mental construction to cope with the fragility of the human life.* All of these are evidence to the brokenness of

mankind's relationship with our Creator. There is a fundamental problem every person has. We are all fallen and tainted with original sin; which leaves us desperately in need of a Savior. People have tried countless times, but we can never find a way to save ourselves. As the prophet Isaiah said in chapter 59 "your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God," There is a great canyon separating sinful man from the Holy God.

This is where God stepped in and went above and beyond to reconcile Himself to mankind. He chose to send His Son, Jesus Christ to become incarnated. Jesus is God's greatest gift He has ever given to the world. Jesus is the long awaited Messiah that will restore all of creation to the way it should have been all along. Jesus didn't come to abolish the first covenant God made with the Israelites on Mount Sinai. No He came in order to fulfill the law on our behalf.

And He did just that. He lived the perfect life we only wish we could live. Then Christ shed his blood so that you would be reconciled to God the Father. So that the canyon of separation between you and God would be bridged with the cross on which He died. Paul put it this way in Romans chapter 8:1 *there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* Everyone who confesses Jesus to their Lord is saved from condemnation and given the free gift of everlasting life with God the Father. In the waters of Holy Baptism you were adopted into the family of God, all of your sins were washed away when the water plus the Word of God were applied to your forehead. God came to you just where you were in life and claimed you as His long lost child. Just as Paul described it in chapter 8:29 *that [Christ] he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, but through baptism we are given the privilege of being called His brothers and sisters. Every Christian is called into faith by the Holy Spirit who works through the Word and the Sacraments to turn people's hearts to Christ. Paul continues in verses 30 *those people who are called also they are justified, and those who are justified in faith are glorified in Christ Jesus.*

How are we to respond to this Word of God? We are encouraged in our faith in Christ, because if God is for us who or what can stand against us? Since God gave the ultimate gift of His son to save us, he will certainly give us whatever is necessary to bring to fulfillment the work begun at the cross; which is the purpose of the church to witness to a dying world the one way to eternal life, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Who can condemn one of God's children? All of your sins have been forgiven; you have been cleansed with the blood of the Lamb of God. No one can condemn a person that God has justified through faith in Christ. The accuser loses his voice, because in Christ we are redeemed from sin, from death, and

from the Devil eternally. Christ died so that you would never have to face eternal death, but jump from death into life with our Heavenly Father. Nothing separates God from his children anymore. Just as when Christ breathed his last breath on the cross, the Temple curtain was torn from top to bottom. God's sacred place the Holy of Holies was exposed because the ultimate sacrifice was complete. No longer would any sacrifices be necessary, Christ was the Lamb of God that was slain for all of mankind. That reminds me of a story I came across...

There were two Christians who differed on the question of the believer's safety in Christ. They were discussing the question, and one said to the other: "I'll tell you, a child of God is safe only so long as he stays in the lifeboat. He may jump out, and if he jumps out he is lost." To this the other replied, saying: "You remind me of an incident in my own life. I took my little son out with me in a boat. I realized, as he did not, the danger of his falling or even jumping into the water. So I sat with him all the time, and all the time I held him fast, so he could neither fall out nor jump out of the boat." "But," said the first speaker, "he could have wiggled out of his coat and got away in spite of you." "Oh," said the other, "you misunderstood me if you supposed I was holding his coat; **I was holding him.**"

So the question arises what is your faith in Christ founded on? Is it ourselves? Or maybe our mountain top experiences throughout life? *No.* Our faith is founded on the work of the Spirit who enlightened our hearts and minds to the saving Gospel message through His Word and His Sacraments. When we do not feel particularly close to God, or at times we feel so down in a valley that we feel separated and abandoned by everyone even God; but remember just because we feel separated doesn't mean it is true. In fact the Truth is just the opposite Jesus gives us these promises: *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.* **I will be with you always even to the very end of the age.** Christ is the one that holds onto us so that we don't fall out of the boat. Our salvation is secure because it is His Almighty Hands. Paul trusted in these same promises he wrote this to the Christians in Rome. 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.* ³⁸ *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,* ³⁹ *neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.