

Devotion from the past ... 2003

Read [Romans 8:31–39](#)

Who Can Be Against Us?

That's not a question we ask our students, governing board, or congregation. If we asked it, several volunteers would surely pop up, ready for action. One thing that we who work in Lutheran education repeatedly realize is that lots of people can be against us.

Paul's words to Roman Christians weren't in context of believers versus believers. Those who were against the Roman Christians carried indictments, swords, and fire. The worst most of us face is cruel criticism, tight wallets, snotty remarks, disrespect, and apathy. That those weapons come from our congregational family can be painful and even threatening to our health. It's much harder on our emotions and morale when trouble comes from those we love and serve.

We must realize that we're not always right. That we make mistakes. Sometimes big ones! Sometimes those we serve probably see us as the ones with cruel criticism, tight wallets, *etc.* Our ministry focus won't always match the congregation's ministry focus. Such situations call for peaceful compromise or other resolution, quickly, before the sin of bitterness sets in.

But what about those times when we perceive God's will better than others? What about times such as when we insist on regular worship for students and confirmands, adherence to God's word in adult Bible class, something more than arts and crafts in VBS or Sunday school, and commitment to outreach through educational ministries?

God reveals His will through His word. Only as we continually study God's word will we see, by the power of the Holy Spirit, what God wants done in our respective places of ministry. We must realize that even God can be against us when we're not in sync with Him.

Ministry isn't an easy way to make a living. Nor should we expect it to be! Ministry involves struggle. It involves fighting Satan in places few people expect him to occupy—Christian congregations and classrooms! Then there is an equally awful potential—that of trying to proclaim Christ and nurture disciples in political situations similar to that faced by the Roman Christians.

God's comfort applies to us in all circumstances. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" As the Roman Christians, Paul, and God Himself knew, many could be against them. The enemy, however, was incapable of its final objective. God's patient and inviting march to eternity would continue through every time and

place. Believers would suffer setbacks and even die, but victory in the name of Jesus didn't suffer from such assaults.

Paul's assurances of God's faithfulness are for us, even as they were for his contemporaries. The only way we can lose faith in our Savior is if we give it up. In the meantime, we continue our ministry through difficulty. Perhaps we stand our ground, perhaps we move to minister elsewhere. But wherever we go, God is faithful.

Prayer Thought: In this first week of Lent, thank Jesus for the victory that established God's faithfulness to us.

Written by Edward Grube, LL.D.
Director of Publications & Communications
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To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Phil. 4:20)