

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL MARCH 20, 2015

Written by the Rev. Brian Snyder '05, pastor of Bower Hill Community Church, and brought to you by the **Church Planting Initiative** at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

SCRIPTURE

ROMANS 8:28-39

28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

31 What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? 33 Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted 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, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 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.

DEVOTIONAL

Plants, animals, microbes—all manner of living organisms must die each day so that I can live. Of course, if I lived more simply, it would mean fewer deaths. But even a vegan's life means death to kales and parsnips. It's the way of God's world. At a visit to PTS, Walter Brueggemann bemoaned the fact that Romans 8 has been relegated to funerals. And yet, the text speaks to the pervasiveness of death in our world. Besides, it's just two weeks to Good Friday, and Jesus' impending death is on our minds. This is the bittersweet truth of Christ's gospel: There is no life without death. It's a hard truth that occasionally catches us sideways. But, our comfort is the question: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" Even death cannot, for death is the means by which life is achieved.

PRAYER

Spirit of life, nothing can separate us from you. You bring renewal even to those places where we see only death. Give us the fresh eyes of faith to see life breaking out anew, both around us and within, through Jesus your Child. Amen.

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