

In this life, there are a few things that give us confidence that we are secure. They are not foolproof, because immoral or illegal acts shatter that confidence. For instance, a wedding ring signals faithfulness and commitment until death. Divorces say otherwise. A paid up mortgage is assurance that the bank can't come after your house. But a fire or tornado on an uninsured house, or failure to pay property taxes bring its loss. Contracts are only as secure as the faithfulness of the signers.

Notably our US Constitution does give an almost irreversible assurance. It says that the **president of the United States shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.** With few exceptions, that power is absolute. If the president or a governor pardons you, you're free from punishment.

Much better than that is an irreversible pardon that does cover every criminal and every crime, every sin and sinner. Paul describes it: **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.

That doesn't mean we are innocent and above accusation. It does mean that we are pardoned of the guilt and punishment. Jesus Christ freed us from all that when he died in our place on the cross. There he exchanged our guilt with his innocence. He signed a contract with His blood that he will never bring our sins up again. As an act of mercy, he has removed them from us as far as the east is from the west and will remember them no more.

But do we still feel condemned by Satan, other people, and our own burdened consciences? Sometimes we do. Let's see how our text might give us peace and confidence through the cross.

Paul assures us from the doctrine of predestination. We teach this only as Good News for the believer, not as an excuse to dismiss unbelievers, as if God did not also desire their salvation.

Our comfort is in this: That we are here because the God of the Universe so arranged it before the creation. It is not by chance that

He called us to hear the Good News of Christ's Cross. By believing it, we have received God's pardon.

Therefore, it will be no accident that we will be glorified in heaven. So sure is Paul that He uses the past tense. Both now, and not yet, we receive the glory God promises to all who call upon Him through faith in Christ. God wanted you here, or you would not be here. John records these words from Jesus. **No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.** 6:44 That you are here means He drew you here. What confidence the cross gives us against all fear and guilt.

God does not let go of us or forget His promises to us. Since He gave His own Son to die to redeem us, how much more will he do all that is needed to keep us? It doesn't matter what may shake our confidence: tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword. We can be confident that none of these will separate us from God's love.

That is not permission to do as you please as if our sin doesn't matter to God. While he doesn't let

you go, he does not promise to prevent you from letting go of Him by persistent impenitence and hardness of heart. He is not a God whose patience we should be test by willful sin or callous regard toward the price Jesus paid to free us from sin.

In VBS the kids shouted loud and often, "The victory is won." We didn't win it, Christ did. The victory over sin, Satan, and death, is all his. Therefore we can't lose the victory unless we fall into unbelief. Thus, we are more than conquerors. Our victory cannot be reversed. We don't have to argue with our conscience or the whispered and weighty accusations of Satan or others who would do his work.

Therefore there is nothing to fear, not even death. We have already died and risen again with Christ in baptism. John also recorded this promise from Jesus: **Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.** 5:24 Note again the past tense, Even now, and not yet are we glorified.

You have the ultimate pardon, and therefore the ultimate

confidence in the cross of Christ
that God's love will never depart.
With that, go in peace. Amen.