

There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God, not even death. This is the reason why we have all come here today, amongst the beautiful scenery of The Maples'; to remember those we love. This is a time and a place where we can thank God and praise Him for the lives of our loved ones and for the new, eternal life, which was promised to them.

Every word of St. Paul's in this passage is precious, but I would especially call your attention to these words: "I am convinced". They speak of Paul's personal conviction. Here the heart of the great apostle is fully revealed.

I believe Paul wrote this chapter to give believers the assurance of salvation. To say it another way, it is written to assure you that you truly are a child of God and that your relationship with God is eternally secure.

Those who God saves, He saves forever.

God's love is unbreakable.

No force—whether external or internal, can tear us away from Him. His love is constant. This is a promise we can hold onto as we remember our friends and loved ones, as we miss them, as we grieve their earthly presence.

As we remember those we love who have departed, we know that death takes them away from us physically, but it cannot separate them—or us—from the love of God. God's love is not contingent on circumstances; it is steady and unchanging.

When we look to Christ we see the ultimate evidence of God's love. Through his sacrifice on the cross, Jesus demonstrated that there is no greater love than this: God gave His Son for us and in doing so, He showed that He will never let go of us. His love is a secure anchor that holds us even when the winds of grief blow in.

As we reflect on the lives of our loved ones, we give thanks to God for them and we find comfort in knowing that they are held by the same unshakable love that holds us. Thanks be to God. Amen.