

Romans 8:28-39

Well, Lord willing we will finish up chapter 8 this week as we move forward here today **and this chapter that is before us** is one we should really work to think about, meditate on and digest **as Paul has been telling those** he was writing to in Rome that they have the incredible gift of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

You and I who are in Christ must remember that we are no longer slaves to sin **but instead we are slaves (in a good way) to righteousness.** **The Holy Spirit moves into our hearts when we receive Jesus Christ** as our Lord and Savior **and the old nature which is tied to Adam is then put to death.**

We might think of the picture of baptism and how it demonstrates that in Christ the old is gone as we go into the water **and as we come out of the water** it demonstrates we have a new life...**We must remember that in Christ** the old is gone and the new has come.

And one of the hardest things for you and I to learn as Christians is that we simply don't have the strength to do what is right in ourselves. **Try as we might we simply can't do it.** **Eventually as we look to honor the Lord in our own strength and find ourselves failing we come to the point that Paul did...**and we say "If I can't do it, then who can?"

And when we realize we don't have the strength and we begin to look outside of ourselves we will learn that the Holy Spirit can do the work in us **as we simply become dependent on Him and we walk with Him** and we talk with Him **and as we do so we will begin to exhibit the fruits of the Spirit.**

There is a theme that we had last week that we are going to be building on this week and I want to just read to you from Romans 8:17-18 which says this ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

I don't know about you but I often think of the glory that will one day be revealed in us...and at the same time I know just like you do that arriving in glory is a process and there is much to be endured as we travel through life to get there. We should remember that the suffering we experience in this world is because we live in a fallen world, we are surrounded by the effects of sin.

Last week if you remember we saw that there were three different things that groan as we go through life. Creation is groaning desiring to enter into a redeemed state...and you and I as humans are groaning as we desire to be clothed with our glorified bodies...and then finally the Spirit of God groans within us and intercedes for us as we go through life.

Let's go ahead here with all this in mind and look at verse 28 of Romans 8 which says this ²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. I think we have all probably heard this verse before haven't we? That God is always working everything out on our behalf and for our good...and yet I think sometimes it is a hard thing to grab hold of and believe.

And the reason for this is because even though we are believers in Jesus we face an awful lot of difficulty. My heart often hurts for many of you as I hear of the difficult things you are passing through in life. So many of you are going through trials and physical issues and I think you along with me sometimes just wish the Lord would cause all the struggles to end.

In our world there are those who struggle with their health, death takes place in those that we love, sometimes we face great financial strain in our lives, our kids sometimes go off the rails, jobs are suddenly lost and the list continues.

In our natural minds we may look at these great trials and say “How on earth can God work these things together for my good?”

As I have studied this out this week I think that often times you and I can struggle with this verse...and I think a lot of the struggle we have can be answered when we work towards defining what the word GOOD actually means here in the verse...So, Let me ask you today what is your definition of good in life?

Do you define GOOD in life as only a physical position that we find ourselves in? Do you define GOOD as having riches, wealth, zero trials, that your family is well and everything is simple and smooth? If so, I have to tell you that you are going to be disappointed and you are going to struggle with what this verse says.

I think there is a better way to think about God working all things together for our GOOD and it's actually found in verse 29 if you look at that with me where the Word says ²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He

might be the firstborn among many brethren. Notice that the desire of God in this verse is to conform us into the image of His Son...that's the ultimate desire that God has for your life...that you and I would become more like His Son...that is the GOOD that God is always working in us.

So if we look at the GOOD that God wants to do in us and we realize that what He wants to do is make us more like Jesus then we can begin to see that all the trials and difficulties are all working together to transform us and change us and build us up...God can and does take even the wickedness of the world and the fallenness of this world and uses it to minister to us and help us and develop our character.

I would also remind us as we study this today that we can see many individuals in the Bible who passed through incredible difficulty and yet as they did so God worked it for their good in the end.

Peter and Paul were men that went through much for the kingdom of God...I suppose we could say that anyone that wants to see the will of God played out in their life has also seen great trials. We might even think of two men from the old testament...Job and Joseph.

Job was a man that really and truly lost it all in his life. He lost his children and even his physical health as boils broke out all over his body...So bad was it that he even wished for death...In the end though we are told that God restored what had been lost and even more so.

Joseph is another man that had things quite difficult in his life...his own brothers ended up selling him into slavery and from there he ended up in prison after the wife of his master accused him of attempting to take advantage of her...then after all that when the chief

baker and the cupbearer to the ruler of Egypt had dreams while in prison, Joseph successfully interpreted them and then got forgotten and left out when he should have been honored...After all this the Lord allowed him to be raised up when the Pharaoh had a dream himself that no one could interpret...After all this Joseph was back with his brothers again and they were afraid that he might take revenge on them and Joseph said this in Genesis 50:20 ⁰ **But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.**

God certainly does have a way of working things out...we may not see it in this world and let's just be honest here that we may not FEEL like God is working things for our good...Our thoughts may tell us otherwise and our emotions may lie to us...You and I are not to operate nor allow our emotions and thoughts to dominate us though...Instead we are to build on the sure foundation of God's Word...God is working things for our good.

I want to point out to you that this verse in Romans 8 says that God works how many things out for our good? ALL THINGS it says...not some things or a few things or 95% of things but ALL things are being used for our benefit as we are conformed to the image of His Son. You and I can trust that even in the worst of circumstances God can and will use it to make us more like Jesus...that my friends is a beautiful promise indeed.

We might also notice here in this verse that it makes mention that only specific people are going to benefit from the things God is working for our good...look at verse 28 again as it says ²⁸ **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who**

are the called according to *His* purpose. We actually see two qualifications here...to enjoy this you must be a person that loves God and you must be a person that has been called according to His purpose...and that just means you have been brought to Jesus and you have chosen to receive Him in your life.

But I want to ask you today how do we know that we love God? I think there is a very easy litmus test to know if we love God or not...It's given to us over in 1 John 5:3 when the Word says ³**For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.** Jesus set this standard as well in John 14:21 when He said ²¹**He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."**

I have to ask you today do you love God? And if so do you keep His commandments? Do you do that which pleases God in your life or do you just go on and do what pleases you? If you say you love God...but you live on in sin you have a problem and you may not love God the way you think you do...perhaps you need to repent if you embrace a particular sin or attitude that is clearly contrary to what God's Word says.

So here we have a very precious promise for us in the Word of God as Paul simply says that God is indeed working everything together for our good as we love God and are called by Him for His purpose...I might just add that the purpose, the reason God has called you to Himself and saved you is that you might glorify His name and you might live for Him.

All right let's move forward here if you will look with me at verses 29-30 of Romans 8 which say this ²⁹ **For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.** ³⁰ **Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

Well...this is a doozy of a few verses here and you probably know that there have been many debates and many different opinions about these verses...and I am not here today to try and set you straight, or try and tell you how things are...I believe that within these verses there is a certain mystery...and really I believe that you and I as humans can only see partially while our Father in heaven sees things in full...I liken the election and the calling of God to the Trinity...The Bible clearly teaches it but it is beyond the grasp of human understanding.

As I studied this through this week I wanted to bring out some things for you to think about and rather than get caught in the weeds I want to just briefly work to define 5 words that we have before us in this section that work together in the lives of those who believe...Those words if you are taking notes are going to be Foreknew, Predestined, Called, Justified and Glorified.

And really as I thought about these words I think 4 of the 5 words we would mostly all agree on...It's the word Predestine that many get hung up on...so let's work through these things in order and we'll just briefly talk about them...and I want you to know that these verses here are really setting us up for what will take place in chapters 9-11 as Paul will speak of God's election of Israel, their rejection of His invitation and God's future work in His people.

First we are told that God foreknew us...that's kind of interesting to think about. You and I, as we go through life we are stuck in this little thing called TIME aren't we? I mean we know about the past and we know about the future a little bit because of what the Bible says but God in His infinite wisdom can see the beginning from the end...It is as if God stands outside of time and while you and I can only see one point of time...God can see every point of time all at once...God can look at you and me and He can see the finished product rather than who we are right now...as such He works in us, around us and through us for our good.

It's amazing that God knows us before we are ever born...Psalm 139:13-16 says this **For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.**

¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made;
Marvelous are Your works,
And *that* my soul knows very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
And in Your book they all were written,
The days fashioned for me,
When as yet *there were* none of them.

Did you know that God had a plan for your life from before you were born? God fashioned us in the womb and He knows the days that are laid out before us before there were any of them.

Over in Ephesians 1:4-6 the Word says ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. Here we are told God chose us to be in Him before the world was ever made...that we were predestined to be His kids and that He has accepted us.

God said the following to Jeremiah the prophet over in Jeremiah 1:5 which says “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.” The Lord had a plan for Jeremiah even before he was born.

So the simple reality is that God foreknew you before you were even born, He knows who you are, He knows the choices you will make, He sees your heart and most importantly He has a plan for your life...Don't ever think God doesn't have something incredible and special for you as you look to serve Him and honor Him...The world may say you are a nobody but God says I love you so much I am going to die for you and save you as you place your faith in my Son.

Now the second word of these 5 before us today is the one we struggle with the most...It's the word predestine as Paul says that those that He foreknew He also predestined to be made into the image of His Son.

The Word predestine means to mark out beforehand and the way I see this is that God because He knows all things and He knows how you and I are going to respond to every situation and because He knows

that we are going to come to the point in our lives that we are going to choose Him...He chooses us and predestines us to come to the place of salvation.

Now there are many that have a hard time with this when they think of God choosing those who are going to know Him...and they will say well if God chooses who will know Him does He then also choose those that will not know Him...In other words does God make some people to go to hell...to this I would say emphatically absolutely not...2 Peter 3:9 simply says **The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.** In addition to this the Bible is clear that Jesus died for the sins of the world that WHOSOEVER believes in Him might be saved.

I personally have no problem with the truth that God predestines those who receive Jesus in their hearts while at the same time allowing man the CHOICE to either accept Him or reject Him...If you choose to reject Jesus then simply said you were not predestined to know Him...If you do choose Jesus then guess what? You were predestined to know Him.

I do understand that there are people that have a lot of opinions about this and I like what Pastor Chuck always said when He said you can choose whatever view point you want to have and I'll take the other side and I can both provide plenty of scripture to support whatever view you want me to take...I think that we should just accept the truth that is given to us for what it is and just rejoice that God in His

sovereignty has chosen you and I that have received Jesus in our hearts.

So because God stands outside of time and he foreknows who we are and what we will choose, He then predestines us to come to know Him and then knowing all this He calls us to Himself...I'm so thankful that Jesus calls us to follow Him and that this calling does not fade away throughout the life of every individual. Jesus absolutely works in and around us even when we fail to respond to His call on our lives.

I know that for myself I rejected the call of God for many years...I just didn't understand His love for me...to me it was foolish to think that a man named Jesus could change my life...it just didn't compute in my mind and heart...and yet the Lord kept calling and kept working in me attempting to get my attention.

I believe John 6:44 is a good verse to remind us of the call of God towards Himself when Jesus said ⁴⁴**No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.** I sure hope you are thankful for the Father's calling of you to Himself.

As I was writing notes I was reminded of what I read in my devotions in Isaiah 55:1 which says **“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.**

The scriptures provide repeated invitations to come to the Lord and find satisfaction in your life. You can come freely to the Lord Jesus as He calls you to Himself...the Lord won't force you to come...He will

give you the choice and as you choose to receive Jesus in your heart you will say to yourself...The Lord had a calling on my life even before I was in the womb.

So the Lord foreknows us, He predestines us, He calls us (and this is the only one of these words that has anything to do with us as we must respond to His call in our lives) and then the next word we have is that God JUSTIFIES us...and we have talked about this over the last several weeks but remember that being justified can be said to mean JUST AS IF I NEVER SINNED...It's a legal term that describes an individual that stands before a judge and is found innocent...and of course you and I are justified because of what Jesus has done on the cross for us...The moment we accept Christ the judgments that were against us are absolved and we are pardoned and seen as if we had no sin whatsoever.

And then finally the last word in these verses is the end goal of God that we have been talking about that He will glorify us...We all who are in Jesus are in the process of being sanctified and changed which will lead to us being glorified...Yes as we go through this world there will be suffering and difficulty but remember that ALL THINGS ARE WORKING FOR OUR GOOD.

Let's read verses 29-30 again here so we can see the flow of the text and then we'll move on. They say ²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

As we move on here Paul is now going to be asking several questions to those who are reading if you look at verse 31 which says ³¹**What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?** Well when I read this not only does Paul have questions but I also have a question...Paul says what shall we say to these things?...I would ask what things? I mean what is Paul referring to?

Well, I believe you can probably look at all that has been said in the first 8 chapters and then respond to this question...We might think about how incredibly lost humanity is as described in chapters 1-3 and how all of us are sinners, and all of deserve the judgment of God in our lives and how none of us are righteous...

And then we might think for a minute about the incredible love of God and how He did not want us to stay in a state of being lost but wanted to save us and how the Father sent the Son to die for us on the cross, to pay the ransom that you and I might go free...

And then you might think about how as we come to Jesus by faith just as Abraham experienced being right with God in that very same way that we are justified and we are set free and we are given a new identity...We no longer associate with Adam and his fallen nature but instead with Jesus...and we begin to find that sin is no longer our master and we begin to find that we have great freedom in Christ...

And then we might think about how we begin to live for Christ and how we are no longer orphans but we are adopted into the family of God and He has given us His Spirit and how we can have victory in the Spirit...

And then we might think of how the Father foreknew us, predestined us, called us, justified us and will glorify us one day and how God is with us even in the sufferings of this life...

And then if you ask the question what shall we say to ALL these things? What should be the response? Well how about a Hallelujah, or a thank you Jesus, or a grateful cry from our hearts as we worship Him and honor Him for all He has done on our behalf.

And then we might ask ourselves...If God has done so much and He is for us then who is it that can really be against us? And the answer to that is really nobody...We'll develop this in the next verses and of course in this world there are those that will come against us and Satan himself will come against us but we have nothing to worry about because our Savior Jesus has done so much for us.

Look with me at verse 32 which develops this and says ³²**He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?** If our great heavenly Father has done the unthinkable in giving His Son as a sacrifice for us and allowed Him to be delivered up...How will he not freely give us all things.

Of course our loving heavenly Father is going to work on behalf of those that have accepted His Son and been adopted into His family...You know there isn't much I will get mad about in life but if you mess with one of my kids or my wife then you had better believe there is going to be a problem...I think it's the same way with our Father...He is jealous for us, He works on our behalf, He ministers to us and helps us and gives us everything we need that we might live for Him.

I think we see a glimpse of the depth of the Father's love for us in that He allowed His own Son to be delivered up for us...think about how hard that would have been for the Father to watch His Son suffer for the sins of the world...How hard it must have been to have your Son praying in the garden pleading that if there be any other way that it would be so...and then to watch your Son submit to your will which meant the death of the cross.

I think we sanitize the suffering of Jesus and languish of the Father...The price that was paid to set us free was incredible, it was monumental, it was supernatural and the Father and Jesus both worked together to accomplish the plan...As such, because God has gone to such great lengths to win us to Himself...How will He not give us all things that are necessary.

If you look with me at verses 33-34 we'll continue Paul's questions...they say ³³**Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.** ³⁴**Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.**

Who will bring a charge against God's elect? Well if you think about it there are a lot who might bring charges against the elect of God...In this world we will find that there are many enemies of the cross, many who deny Jesus and look to persecute those who serve the Lord.

People will accuse us, people will make false declarations about us, people will say all kinds of things to try and cause us to walk away from the faith. Humanity is full of hatred towards Jesus, just turn on the news or talk with a few people about the Lord and you will find this out.

And yet while all the people of the world may come against us we must remember that in reality no one can bring a charge against us because in Christ we have already been justified...Isn't that amazing, people will find all kinds of faults against us and yet at the end of the day the Father looks at us and sees a BIG FAT JUSTIFIED stamped upon us as the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all failures...You know the world might be right when they accuse us...we all fall short and yet the Love of God is thorough and complete.

The next question is who is it that will condemn? I know one who constantly condemns us...His name is Satan and he just loves to try and throw our failures before us and cause us to have the FEELING that God is not pleased with us and we deserve damnation...remember though what Romans 8:1 says when it says **There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**

Keep in mind that Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us before the Father...The enemy accuses, Jesus simply says they are mine...and the enemy loses just like that. Don't give more power to our great enemy Satan than he deserves...yes, he is crafty, yes he knows more than us, yes he can easily overpower us personally...but guess what? We have one who intercedes on our behalf who defeated Satan and has set us free from his condemnation...Greater is He that is in us that He that is in the world.

Verses 35-36 say ³⁵**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?** ³⁶**As it is written:**

**“For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”**

I want to ask you today do you really think there is anything in all the world that will separate you from the love of Jesus? **I don't think so...Whether it be the tribulations of this world,** the persecutions of our lives or the struggles of this world that we endure or even death...**none of it will separate us from God's love.**

If you are in Jesus then you have nothing to fear...If you are in Jesus then you are a part of the family of God...**If you are in Jesus he will provide for you and guide you and help you...**If you are in Jesus you can trust that ALL things are working for your good.

In fact, look at verses 37-39 as Paul concludes this section by saying
³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Not only is Jesus with us but we are told here that in Him we are more than conquerors...**the idea in the original language here is that we are super conquerors...**

In Christ we are victorious, we will be glorified, we will be changed into the image of His Son and there is not one thing that can stop this work in our lives.

Nothing can take us away from the love of God...Death can't do it, nothing in life can do it, the demonic realm can't do it, Satan himself

can't do it, nothing in the world whether high or low or any other created thing can take us away from His great love...and that love is all focused and centralized in Jesus Christ.

I have to just ask us in closing a simple question...How blessed are you and I that have placed our faith in Jesus Christ? We of all people in the world are blessed beyond measure...as such what should be our response? How should we live our lives?

Perhaps you are here today and you are hearing about the incredible blessing of knowing Jesus and you know in your own heart that you are far from God...perhaps you have rejected God in the past, perhaps you haven't receive Jesus in your heart for the forgiveness of your sins...I have to tell you if that is you that you are on the wrong side of history...

The Bible is clear that Jesus is Lord and that one day every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that it is so...You can either choose Jesus on this side of eternity and enter into the blessed position in your life of being His child...or you can reject the love of God as demonstrated through Jesus and find yourself entering into an eternity in hell.

If you need to choose Jesus today I just encourage you to stand up as we close in worship and walk down here with me and I'll pray with you and you can give your heart to Jesus Christ, the one that loved you so much that He gave His life on the cross for your sins.

Let's pray.

Romans 8:28-39 “Nothing Can Separate Us”

Cross References

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