

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



Working Together For Good?!

Romans 8:18-28

Sunday, July 5, 2026

Many of us love to read Romans chapter 8, but we can often miss the underlying meaning. We want a verse to make us feel better when we are in the middle of a tough situation. We tend to think God is promising to fix our present issue.

But the Apostle Paul was not writing a modern self-help book. He was an expert in Jewish law. And because he was, he thought deeply about the big story of God's plan for humanity.

To understand, we must look at the Scriptures like a person from the first century with help from the original Greek and Hebrew terminology and culture.

Paul does not just invent new ideas. He looks back at the story of Moses and the exodus to explain how Jesus works his plan in us. The Greek word is "exodos," which is very similar to it and means "the way out" or "the road out."

PROGRESSING TOWARD GOODNESS

Think about how Israel found their "way out" of Egypt:

1. **The Escape:** They walked through the Red Sea from slavery.
2. **The Desert:** They wandered through the wilderness.
3. **The Promised Land:** Finally, God led them to a place they were designed for originally.

What is phenomenal is that the book of Romans uses this same pattern in chapters 6 through 8:

Romans 6 is the Escape: We escape being slaves to sin.

Romans 7 is the Desert: Paul talks about God's rules. The rules are good, but they cannot fix our broken hearts.

Romans 8 is the Promised Land: The Spirit leads us to our new life.

Even today, before we get to the final victory, we must walk through times of challenge, struggle, and pain today.

Romans 8:18-22

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption

and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ESV

Paul does something interesting; he writes about the earth like it is a living person. He explains that creation - the dirt, the trees, and the stars, etc.) are "waiting."

He uses a strong Greek word in verse 20. He says the earth was subjected to **"futility."** The Greek word means something is empty, broken, and cannot do what it was made to do.

Why is the whole earth broken? In Genesis, Adam and Eve broke God's rules, and because of it, the ground was cursed. This was not this planet's choosing; human beings brought death to this world. And now the earth is trapped; things fall apart, things rot, and things die.

So, all of creation is waiting anxiously for God to fix the human race. When He finally fixes us, the earth will be healed too.

WHAT GOOD REALLY MEANS

Now we can take another look at the famous verse in this chapter:

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ESV

What does "good" mean here? Paul uses the Greek word *agathon*, but because he is a Jewish, he is thinking of the ancient Hebrew word for good - **Tov**.

In the English language, "good" usually means "nice" or "happy." But *Tov* means something much deeper. When God made the earth in Genesis, He looked at the light, the water, and the animals. He said, "It is *Tov*." He meant everything was working perfectly. Everything was in complete harmony. There was no pain, no sickness, and no death. Everything did exactly what God designed it to do.

So, when Paul says God works all things together for "good," he is not talking about your bank account. He is not promising that you will get a new car. He is saying something much bigger.

God is using everything - even our tears and our pain - to drag this broken universe back to being *Tov*. The Lord is working to make the world perfect and harmonious again, just like the Garden of Eden.

Conclusion

So, even in your individual situation, He is guiding you in a way that fits you into His overall plan. What happens with you affects every other person and thing in the world. (Butterfly effect). Even though some things are not working out as you wanted them to, or even planned them to, it all fits in to the big story. When it is all said and done, the end of the matter will be just as God planned - it will all be **TOV!**

Your pain is not an accident. You are part of God's giant plan to rebuild all things.