

VII. The Gospel of Jesus Christ in Biblical Perspective  
*The Majesty, Message and Ministry of the Gospel*  
“The Gospel Ministry from Eternity through Time to Eternity”  
Romans 8:28-39  
Dr. Harry Reeder  
November 11, 2012 – Morning Sermon

We are in Romans 8. We return to our series on the study of the Gospel and this is our seventh study. We are on the last section of this series which is the ministry of the Gospel. We will start out by looking at Romans 8:28-30. This is the Word of God. It's the truth. Romans 8:28-30 says [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. [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 among many brothers. [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.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, our God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

We are in the very middle of a series on our study of the Gospel. I have divided it up into three sections; the majesty, the message and the ministry of the Gospel. We are now at the third section which is the ministry of the Gospel. Why have we done this? It is because the Gospel is absolutely crucial. If you get the Gospel wrong you can't get anything else right. It is that factual. The Gospel is the foundation, the formation and the motivation of the Christian life. Every Christian doctrine, every truth in the Bible is rooted in the Gospel. It is the foundation for the Christian life. I want to be a Godly husband. It's the Gospel that guides me. It's the formation. What does it mean to be a Godly wife, a Godly parent, a member of the body of Christ, a citizen in a country? The Gospel is the foundation for every single Christian doctrine and life call of the command of the Word of God to us. It's also the formation. It's the channel markers. It's what keeps us focused. It's the channel markers through which the rivers of life flow to us and from us. Finally it's the motivation of the Christian life. It's what moves the believer to do why they do what they do. Why do we keep God's commands? It's because we love Him. Why do we love Him? It is because He first loved us and loosened us from our sins.

Let me remind you of the three things. We looked at the majesty, the message and the ministry of the Gospel. When we looked at the majesty of the Gospel we noted from the Word, Euangelion. The word *euangelion* is actually a royal term. It refers to a publication that is made by a king when he wins a victory. So what has happened? God the Father has sent His Son into this world and He has triumphed over all of His enemies and saved His people from their sins. He has achieved the mission of defeating the enemies of God and the enemies His people and even those who were His enemies and has now made them His people. So the Gospel is the triumphant royal message of the victory of the King over all of His enemies and He has saved His people.

What is that Gospel message? It is a message about God because salvation is of and from the Lord. It is God who saves us and then it is a message about sin. It saves us

from our sin. Then it is a message about Jesus Christ. He saves us through His Son, Jesus Christ our Redeemer. It is a message about grace. God did this out of His free, uncoerced grace. God met everything necessary to save His people from their sins, simply out of His grace. He didn't need us but He wanted us. We needed Him but we didn't want Him yet He saved us by His grace. Then the Gospel is a message about faith and repentance. It summons us to believe in Jesus Christ and to repent of our sins. That is what we studied on the message. In other words, the Gospel message reveals what God the Father has done through His Son to save His people from their sins.

I want to throw some Bible words out that we don't spend much time talking about like propitiation which means satisfaction or expiation which means to send away or intercession or mediation. That's the Gospel message. Jesus came and gave a satisfaction for our sins. He propitiated the wrath of God by paying for our sins. So the Gospel is a history of what Christ has done for us. That is what the message is declaring. It is what God the Son has done, sent by God the Father to save us. Expiation, He has taken our sins away from us. Mediation, He is the One Mediator between God and man. It is the One man Christ Jesus. He is the Intercessor who ever lives to intercede for us. So the Gospel message is a declaration of what Christ has done.

Now we move to a third section which is the ministry of the Gospel. This is what the Gospel says the Holy Spirit is doing to bring us to Jesus, the Redeemer. In other words, it's a glorious thing that God the Father sent His Son. It's a glorious thing that God the Son went to the cross and won the victory over all of His enemies and saved His people from their sins but how do we get to Him? How does Harry Reeder who was dead in his sins, under the load of his guilt, who could not come to Christ, did not want to come to Christ, get to Christ? That is the ministry of the Gospel.

So now we're going to get some more words in the coming weeks in this series. We're going to talk about calling, how we were called. We'll talk about regeneration, justification, sanctification, adoption and glorification but right now I just want to give an overview of it from the passage of Scripture that I call the Hallelujah of the Bible. It's my favorite text. When I die I want to make sure this one is read. I just love this passage of Scripture.

Romans 8:28-30 starts off with an amazing phrase, [28] *And we know...* Whatever is about to be said, we know. If I could sing here is what I would sing, Blessed Assurance. I know. We know. *Blessed assurance Jesus is mine, why?* It is because He made me His. *Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine, O what a foretaste of glory divine!* It's just a taste and glory is secured for me. *Heir of salvation, I'm an heir of salvation.* I have been purchased by God. I have been born of the Spirit (regeneration). I've been washed in His blood (justification). *This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long* and I can know. We know.

What do we know? Romans 8:28 says [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.* He intrudes to the affairs of a broken world, in the lives of broken men and women like me and you and when He comes, by His sovereign grace He causes all things to work together for good. It's not saying come to Jesus and all things are good. So dismiss the prosperity gospel, the name it and claim it gospel where all you get is good things. No, why would He bother telling us that all things work together for good if we're only going to get good things? Obviously there are some loose ends in a broken world, aren't there?

People get sick, people die, people close a business where I'm working and my children don't just grow up saying 'daddy you're the most wonderful person in the world and I want to obey you.' I am in a broken world and all things aren't good in this world. There are hurricanes and tornadoes. All of those things are out there.

Here is what He says to His people. Here is what you can know. In this broken world, God is causing all things to work together for good. That is God's promise but that promise is only given to a specific people. He gives two identifying marks as to who has that promise. Mark number one is those who love God. Here is the only problem. I'm born into this world not loving God but loving myself, me. I don't love the Lord with all my heart, soul and mind. I love me. So how do I get to loving Him?

So here is the second mark. To those who love God who are the 'called ones' according to His purpose. The One whom He has purposed to call from their sins to Himself are the ones who love Him. In other words, who loves Him? It is those whom He has first loved and called. So He called you, you love Him and therefore there is a saving relationship. Therefore you can know this; the God who called you and saved you has made a promise, not that all things are good, but that all things work together for good and that promise has been given to you.

If you're reading this and you haven't come to Him, you don't love Him. You may want to know about loving Him and that may be why you're reading this today. I want to tell you that He has declared His love in the giving of His Son and His Son came into this world to save sinners. Everyone around you is one of those. I tweeted this week that the Gospel message is to save all of those who have done evil and succeeded and all of those who thought they were doing good and failed. He saves sinners. He saves the religious and the irreligious. He saves all who put their trust in Him so come to Him and here's a promise; all things work together for good. He is calling you to love Him who has first loved sinners like me and you.

When He says this He now begins to give us what the theologians have called the golden chain of redemption. How do we get called to love Him and start loving Him when we don't? How do we get out of the tomb of sin? We are born into this world dead in our sins. How do we get out of the tomb of sin to the triumph Christ? Dead people can't live or respond. If I'm spiritually dead I can't respond. So how do I get from the deadness of the tomb of my sin to the triumph of the resurrected Christ? He'll tell us how to get there. There are five links in a golden chain and all five are unbreakable.

Romans 8:29-31 says [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 among many brothers.* [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 shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* Do you see that unbreakable chain? Let's look at the flow here. He starts in eternity past. Those whom He foreknew He predestined. Those whom He predestined He calls. Now we are into time. In eternity past He foreknows and He predestined. Then out of eternity past into time He calls us and justifies us. Then we go into eternity future and He glorifies those whom He has justified, called, predestined and foreknown.

So let's look at this text very closely now. Those whom He foreknew He predestined. What does it mean to foreknow? The word 'foreknew' in the Greek is *proegno* and we get the word prognosis from this. In other words, based on God's

knowledge He has accomplished something. Some would say ‘those whom He foreknows He predestined.’ God looks down through the corridors of time and if Harry hears the Gospel long enough and meets Cindy then Harry will come to Me, I will predestine him. That is not what the text is saying. The text doesn’t say what He foresaw. It could have said that but it doesn’t say that. It says whom He foreknew.

Does that word knew, know (*ginosko* – Greek word) sound familiar to you? Adam knew Eve. She conceived. Abraham knew Sarah. She conceived. It doesn’t mean you keep this record of let’s say Sarah being five foot four, ninety years old and now we have a child because I *know* that. The word know doesn’t just mean accuracy of cognition but it means intimacy of relationship. It’s the word we use to describe marital intimacy that results in a child. So the text is saying that before you existed, God loved you. Why? It was for His own glory. Because He loved you He then decreed all of those things that make you as a person come to Him personally through persons and the means He has established.

He has predestined the preaching of the Word, the parents you would have, the events in your life. He has decreed all of those things working personally through people. They’re not robots. God works personally through people and then those people are responding personally. Then they’re preaching, praying, talking and then God uses those things that He has predestined to use to work in your heart to bring you to say “This Christ is mine” and you then rationally, emotionally and volitionally came to this Christ because He had decreed that He would work and seek you the lost one to bring to Himself which is why Jesus says ‘all that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me and I lose not one.’

If we try to play games with the Word because we want to get God off the hook somehow and we say ‘God only predestines what He foresees’ the text doesn’t say that. If you say that then you’ve just made God a respecter of persons. Number three you’ve just gotten works salvation and you don’t have grace. So other than those three problems you’re fine. Another problem is that if you say that you’ve just turned around what Jesus said when He said “All that the Father gives to Me comes to Me” and you are saying “All that come to Me, the Father gives to Me.” The text doesn’t say that. How do they come to Him? It is because God knew you before you existed and then God decreed all of those things that happened. He decreed those who would die so that you could get the Bible in your language and then they willingly died for Jesus Christ to get the Bible in your language. He decreed those people who would come into your life. He arranged those things. He was causing those things to work together to bring you from darkness to light and from death to a Savior.

Now why did He do that? It wasn’t simply to get you to heaven and away from hell. He tells you in the text why He does that. Before He gets to the last three parts of the chain, when He finishes foreknowledge, whom He foreknew He predestined, and before He gets to called He says in Romans 8:29 [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 among many brothers.* In other words, why has God from eternity past come into your life to bring you from the cemetery of sin, to a living Savior in everlasting glory? He summoned you from death unto life in Christ. He summoned you from the dominion of sin into a personal forever life changing relationship with Jesus Christ. He

summoned you from the dominion of sin to have a life transforming, to be conformed to the image of His Son. It's a forever relationship with His Son.

He did it so that His only Son is no longer His only Son but now He is the firstborn among many brethren. God gave His only Son who gave Himself on the cross and what is the harvest? I will bring many sons to glory! Now Jesus is the firstborn of many sons who will be brought to glory to be with Him forever. That's why He foreknew you, predestined you, it was to bring you to a living, life transforming, forever relationship with His Son. Now, He has through His Son many sons and daughters for glory.

Now, then where does that lead to? Now we leave eternity and come into time. Those whom He foreknew and predestined He called. Then those who He called He justified. Those whom He justified He glorified and now we have just stepped into eternity future. We went from eternity past into time and then into eternity future. The Apostle Paul led by the Holy Spirit commits grammatical mayhem to get a theological point across. Has anybody reading this been glorified yet? Some may be close but anyone still living on earth has not yet been glorified. We still have that in future but notice that Paul put that in the past tense. He put what is future in eternity in the past tense in order to declare that it is already a done deal. Those whom I foreknew I predestined. Those whom I predestined I call. Those whom I call I justify. Those whom I justify I glorify. Those whom I glorify I lose not one of those who belong to Me. I will bring many sons to glory. So He takes what is future and puts it in the past tense to tell you blessed assurance, Jesus is mine, just a foretaste of the promised glory divine.

Let's pretend like we just went to a Sunday school class. Jesus was born to save us from our sins. We are going to walk through the Advent Season with the ministry of the Gospel that takes us from the dominion of sin to a life changing personal forever relationship with Jesus Christ. How does He do it? He calls us and He justifies us but Paul is only giving us the cliff notes. Actually to get you to glory the ministry of the Gospel will do six things. The first thing it will do for you is what the Bible calls effectual calling. We will study this more in-depth in the next study when we take communion. Effectual calling is when He removes the persuasion of sin in your, He gives you eyes to see, ears to hear and He gives you a new perspective.

I was raised in a Christian Missionary Alliance church and they preached the Gospel to me. When we weren't there and we were traveling around because my dad was in baseball whatever church we went to my parents always picked a Gospel preaching church for us to go to. I went the other way because I was resisting that external call and the external call kept coming. God was using it and then at age 21 the Holy Spirit gave me eyes to see and ears to hear. I realized I was a sinner. I need that Savior. This sin that I have idolized, the identity of my life of immorality, ungodliness, blasphemy and all of that was not life. That's emptiness. He gave me eyes to see and ears to hear and the persuasion of sin He took away.

Then He brought me to Himself and I was regenerated which is point two. I was born again. Not only did He take me from the persuasion of sin by calling and giving me a new perspective but He took me from the power of sin with regeneration and gave me a new heart. *[17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come* (2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV). I've been born again

and that led me to a third thing. Because I was born again I could now believe and repent in Jesus Christ for I had been set free from the tomb of sin.

So the third thing was that I was justified through justification. I have a new record. My old record of sin was done away with. My new record of righteousness in Jesus Christ had been given to me that was absolutely perfect. So not only do I have a new perspective through calling and the eradication of the persuasion of sin. Then regeneration is the breaking of the power of sin. I have a new heart through justification which is the removal of the penalty of sin and I have been given a new record.

This leads me to number four where I changed position of sin. I was outside the family of God. Now I'm in the family of God. I have been adopted through adoption. I am part of the sons and daughters of God. I belong to Jesus Christ my Lord and my Savior. I can now call God my Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. I have been adopted and I have a new family. This is all under past grace. In other words, if you are reading this today and you're a Christian all of those four things are done and they won't be approved upon. You'll never be more called, regenerated, justified or adopted than you are right now. So now you're at point five.

Point five is sanctification. You have a new life. Now you're leaving the practice of sin, growing in grace. That's present grace which is what God is doing in you now. Now where are you headed? That is future grace.

That is point six which is glorification and that's when He gives you a new home. That is when He will eradicate the very presence of sin and the ability to sin. It will all be gone. That's when we arrive there, in His presence. I just gave you the outline for the next six sermons – calling, regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. That is the ministry of the Gospel to take you from the tomb to the throne into eternity. That is what He has given to us.

Now I have put this on a timeline for you. Past grace has to do with effectual calling, regeneration, justification and adoption. Calling was a process and it came to an event called conversion that culminated in your regeneration, justification and adoption. Now you're in present grace which is sanctification and that's another process. That will culminate in another process which is glorification which falls under future grace. We'll walk our way through to understand this in the coming studies ahead.

In the next study we'll look at effectual calling, the internal call of the Holy Spirit. That culminates in your conversion of regeneration where you're born again and the power of sin has been broken. You are given a new heart. You're justified where the penalty of sin has been removed. You're given a new record and you're adopted where the position of sin has been changed. Now you have a new family. You're now in sanctification where the practice of sin is being eradicated, growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ because I have a new life. I am headed to glorification where I'll be in the presence of the Lord and the presence of sin will be removed.

I want to give you on takeaway from Romans 8 and this is the blessed assurance that's ours. We know that God causes all things to work together for those who love God and they are the ones whom He has called. How did He call them? Before they existed He loved them. In love He predestined them unto adoption as sons. Ephesians 1:4b-6 says *[4b] ...In love, [5] He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, [6] to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.* Then He gave us His Son where we are conformed to His

Son for a forever relationship. Those whom He foreknew He predestined. Those whom He predestined He called. Those whom He called He justified. Those whom He justified He glorified. The same 'whom' that you start off with in eternity past you end up with the same 'whom' in eternity future. He loses not one.

So in this blessed assurance what is the takeaway? It is the Gospel ministry through the Gospel message assures every believer that God the Father through God the Son, by God the Spirit has, is and will save His people from their sins to Himself. God the Father who gave the Son, the Son who gave His life and gave the Holy Spirit, comes to us in the tomb of sin and He has saved us from the persuasion of sin, the power of sin, the penalty of sin and the position of sin. He is saving us from the practice of sin and He will save us from the presence of sin. We *know* that.

Why do we know that? We know that for three reasons. Here are the three reasons that come from the text in Romans 8. One is that God's people are saved by the Sovereign grace of God the Father from all eternity past - whom He foreknew He predestined. The second reason is God's people are saved by the sufficient grace of God the Son. The third reason is God's people are saved by the securing, efficient grace of God the Holy Spirit. I want to finish by reading this last paragraph in Romans 8. Because we have been assured that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit has, is and will save His people from their sins then let's look at what He says in the rest of Romans 8.

Romans 8:31-39 says [31] *What then shall we* (those who have been foreknown, predestined, called, justified and will be glorified) *say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? [32] He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? [33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] 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. [35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded 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 sure 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.*

When Paul says "If God be for us, who can be against us?" he's not saying you don't have adversaries. Satan's very name is adversary. The world is against you. The world's system is against you. The sin inside of you is against you. You have adversaries all around but if God is for us, then who are my adversaries? I heard a guy preach one time who said "God has voted for you and Satan has voted for you, cast the deciding vote." I understand their appeal but when God votes and Satan votes it isn't a tie. If God is for us who can be against us? Romans 8:32 says [32] *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?* How will He not give us all thing necessary to get to glory? He'll cause all things to work together for good to get you there.

He gave His Son and everything else pales into insignificance that He might do. Who will bring a charge, an accusation against God's elect? Jesus erased all those. Who

will bring condemnation? Jesus expiated my guilt from me and He is now interceding for me. Who can separate me from the love of God? By the way, you just got a picture of what Satan's plans are against you as a believer. He is always trying to intimidate you as an adversary. Satan uses accusations, condemnation and isolation. What's our answer? "I'm bigger than him" No! "I'm going to stomp all over him" No! Our answer is the sovereign grace of God the Father is for me, the sufficient grace of God the Son. My Savior, Jesus defeats all my adversaries, erases all accusations, removes all condemnation and insures there will never be any separation. He is sufficient. My Father is sovereign. The Son is sufficient and the Holy Spirit is unstoppable. He is efficient. He will bring to the Son those whom the Father sent Him to redeem and lose not one.

In other words, if I was a reformer 1500 years ago I would end the sermon, which I'm about to do, with these words. Here's how the Gospel ministry ended. In Latin, Si Deus Pro Nobis, Quis contra Nos? If God be for us, who can be against us? Our God is relentlessly unstoppable and through His Son and by His Spirit, will never lose His people. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for this moment we could be together in Your Word. Lord we're moving into a season where we celebrate the birth of Christ who came to save us from our sins, who has secured our salvation and now is securing sinners by the Holy Spirit, by calling those who have been foreknown and predestined. He is doing this by calling them, regenerating them, justifying them, adopting them, sanctifying them, and assuredly will glorify them. Holy Spirit reading this today may be some who aren't at that fifth point of growing in grace. Grace is calling them to Jesus. May they come freely because Jesus came to save sinners. I am so grateful that as we sow the seed everywhere we are assured You have a harvest. We hear Your words to Paul when You said "Paul, I have many people to be saved in this city." So Father, may they come who have been called by the voice of this preacher to a Savior who died for sinners. Holy Spirit call them from their heart. Father, for Your people who are growing in grace anticipating the day of glory that is assured, may we know fully that we don't have to live this life to help You save us. We live this life because we have a great Savior who defeats all our adversaries, erases all accusations, removes all condemnation and has assured that nothing can separate us from Him so our lives are His and may people see Him in us, I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.