

**PP Twisted Scriptures: A Promise For the Ages**

**Part 3-Romans 8:28-30**

6/25-26/2016

We are in a series called Twisted Scriptures, and the verse we are seeking to straighten out today is the oft-quoted 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.” Romans 8:28***

Today’s verse is often given to someone who is going through great difficulty and suffering, as a promise that everything is going to turn out for our happiness in this life

*You just lost your job?...Romans 8:28*

*You have cancer?... Romans 8:28*

*Your dog just had kittens?...Romans 8:28*

But what did Paul mean when he wrote this incredible verse?

I recently went golfing and later, as I reflected on how awful my golf game is, I thought of how important the pin, or the flag is

Without the flag, you wouldn’t know in which direction to Tee off, or, when closer to green, the location of the hole...the entire golf game is directed toward that pin

Paul holds onto the theological flag so we can see where Romans 8:28 must be aimed

***“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” 8:31***

There is no power greater than God, we are secure in His love for us

***“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? 8:32***

He has proven His love in the greatest way possible, by putting His own Son to death to save us

***“Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.” 8:33***

No power-Satanic or human-can threaten the security of our salvation, therefore, ***“Who is to condemn?”*** especially since Christ ***‘is interceding for us’*** 8:34

***“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” 8:35***

Paul answers his own question, ***“neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 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.”***

**Romans 8:38-39**

Christian, we are absolutely secure in our salvation, because of the power of God’s love

And the verse that we are untwisting is to help the Christian’s faith endure, trusting that in all things, God is working to bring about our salvation

What we have here is a promise, and when we uncover it, we see how our faith endures despite living in a fallen world of troubles

***“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28***

**PP 1-This is a promise that we can be certain about**

**PP** ***“And we know...”*** properly means that *we can know*

There is a confidence that the Christian can have, yet tragically, too many believers doubt what Paul is going to teach, but we must grow in our certainty of this truth

Paul is convinced, he is certain what he is about to write is solid, it is truth for our faith

Yet notice that Paul had just written, ***“we do not know what to pray for as we ought”*** 8:26  
 When you and I are struggling in difficult times, nothing seems to make sense... *God why am I  
 having to go through this, what are you trying to show me?*

But here in **verse 28**, We can know with absolute certainty ***“that for those who love God all  
 things work together for good”***

Christian, the Word of God is building within you a faith that is grounded not on speculation, but  
 persuaded confidence, a faith in God’s love for you that will endure ***“tribulation, or  
 distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?”*** 8:35

You are absolutely secure in the love of Christ, your salvation is secure, and that knowledge can  
 preserve us in times when our world seems to be falling apart

## **PP 2-This is a promise exclusively for the Christian**

***“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good”*** 28a

This is a promise that the unbeliever does not have, it is the exclusive right of the Christian

Paul clarifies this next, ***“for those who are called according to His purpose.”*** 28b

Not everyone is ***‘called according to His purpose’***, but all things work together for good, ***‘for  
 those who are’***

Some are confused by Paul’s conditional statement, and believe if our love for God grows  
 cold, or we fall into a sin, then we can lose our salvation

***‘those who love God’*** does not mean that at this moment, I am walking with Him in loving  
 obedience, it is rather another way of saying, *for those who have been saved*

**PP** The Apostle John helps us see this clearly, ***“We love because He first loved us.”*** 1 John 4:19

Our love for God is a response to His love for us, He is the great initiator in this relationship

Paul is saying, for the Christian, God will certainly work ***‘all things work together for good’***

But what that ***‘good’*** is, is the purpose in this promise

## **PP 3-This is a promise that has a purpose**

This past week a friend of mine came in and talked with me how he and his wife lost \$100 grand  
 from a dishonest business partner

Another friend this week was passed over for a promotion for 3<sup>rd</sup> time

Another totaled her car this week, another lost a loved one, another’s wife was in the ER with  
 intestinal pain and another labored in ICU from unknown complications from surgery

I cannot say to any of my friends, don’t worry, if one door closes God has a better one for  
 you to walk through, and you’ll get your money back, your wife will be fine, you’ll get a  
 better job, or God will get you an even better car

There’s a difference between ***‘all things work together for good’***, and *all things work out in this  
 life the way we want*

**Romans 8:28** is not a promise that God will smooth out every rough patch of road we travel on  
 in life and give us smooth sailing with clear skies and balmy waters

**PP** ***“Remember, when one door closes, God has another door for you to walk through—a better  
 door. Those difficulties and challenges are merely stepping stones toward your brighter  
 future.”*** Joel Osteen

Not every bad thing in life here on earth will lead to something better than you ever dreamed  
 God’s ***‘good’*** is much better, and deeper, and more radical than satisfying earthly desires!

One key to understanding this verse is this part: *“for those who are called according to His purpose.”* 28

Listen to this amazing verse that Paul gives to us: *“we have obtained an inheritance, having **PP** been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will”* Ephesians 1:11

The *‘purpose’* of God controls, works all things according to his will

Not too many verses later, Paul calls this an *‘eternal purpose’* 3:11

You may be wondering what exactly this purpose is, and Paul tells us: *“In love, He*

**PP** *predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will”* Ephesians 1:5

His eternal purpose was to save us through Jesus Christ and bring us into His family forever

God is ensuring that *‘all things work together’* to move us into this reality

For those whom God eternally purposed to save, He is working all things together for good, but what exactly is the good he is talking about?

*“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.”* 8:29

What God is working for, the good that He is working all things together for, is that we would be more and more like Christ!

There are experiences we face in life that are nearly unbearable, that we wouldn’t wish on anyone yet find them arriving at our door

**PP** But we are encouraged to *“not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison”* 2 Corinthians 4:16-17

Friends, there is nothing that we experience that God is not working to prepare us for glory

You can know that, and the time to know that is before that trial comes!

His power makes *‘all things work together’* and I can explain it like this

Illus Take 5 small bowls. In each is one of the following: eggs, flour, sugar, Crisco, baking powder. Except for the sugar, they taste terribly if you sample them. But you put them together and every kid in the neighborhood will be over...the mystery of cookies. There is something amazing about taking what normally tastes terrible by themselves, and putting them together to produce something so delicious. What we are about to see in our passage is the way God takes all the individual experiences in life, and mixes them together to produce something more incredible than we could ever possibly know

But the greatest part of this passage is next, and it has the power to fortify a faltering faith with overwhelming proof of God’s love and power to preserve our faith eternally secure

#### **PP 4-This is a promise that has been guaranteed for all time**

Our oldest son Matthew is a songwriter and musician, and Denise and I would agree that any song he writes is wonderful and beautiful

But every once in a while he writes a song that is above the rest: superb, gripping and powerful

And if I could borrow from that, I hope rightfully, and apply that to the Scriptures, I would say that here, Paul goes beyond wonderful and beautiful and up into the upper echelon of superb, gripping and powerful truth

He presents, if you will, a golden chain of 5 inextricable, unbreakable links that will prove, and underscore the permanency of God's relationship with His children

**PP** ***"We have a glorious chain of five links reaching from Eternity in the past to Eternity in the future—foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified! Every link was forged in heaven, and not one can ever be broken."*** H. A. Ironside Commentary – Romans.

We're sort of used to talking about eternal life, having no end, though it is impossible to fathom. You can think about it conceptually, you can try and understand it rationally, but there is no way you or I can appreciate it experientially, it is beyond and outside of our experiences

But let me blow your mind even more...there is an eternity past as well as an eternity future

**PP** ***"Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting."*** Psalm 93:2

**PP** Jude tells us that eternity extends back before time was created: ***"to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever."*** Jude 1:25

**PP** ***"in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began"***

Titus 1:2

Time began at **Genesis 1:1** and it will end **Revelation 20:15** but eternity has always and will always be...it is a line with an arrow at both ends!

**PP** ***"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."*** Psalm 90:2

God is amazing, beyond comprehension, and with this truth of eternity past, Paul tells us there has never been a time that God did not know us...see it in verse 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."*** Romans 8:29

God has loved you Christian, from all eternity for there was never a time He did not know you. His foreknowledge here has nothing to do with our actions of faith, it has everything to do with God's actions, something in view of each of these 5 links

Paul links God's foreknowledge specifically with those that ***'He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son'***

Notice it is a past tense statement taking place in eternity past, and with the aim of shaping His children to be increasingly like Jesus, the ***'firstborn among many brothers'***

**PP** The term ***'firstborn'*** in Jewish culture was used figuratively to represent preeminence

***"And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified."*** Romans 8:30

Paul continues along this chain writing that ***'those whom [God] predestined, He also called'***

**PP** Not the general call of **Matthew 22:14**, ***"For many are called, but few are chosen."***

God issues the invitation to know Him, but the calling Paul refers to is also the God-given ability and willingness to accept it

And as the called respond by faith God has ***'justified'***, declared them to be in right standing with Himself on the basis of the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ

Paul ends by saying what James Denny once said is ***'the most daring anticipation of faith that...the New Testament contains' ... 'those whom He has justified He also glorified.'***

**PP** The word '*glorified*' is in the past tense!

Christians, we are spoken of as already glorified

This is what is so secure about our salvation...why nothing can ever separate us from His love

The work of glorifying us, making us completely like Christ with no sin, God has already guaranteed it

**PP** God foreknew, God predestined, God called, God justified and God glorified

Friends, everything that happens in this life, good, difficult, pleasurable, painful, is used by God to prepare us, to make us more like His Son

He keeps us eternally secure in His love, and everything that we go through He uses to shape us more and more like His Son

No wonder Paul so emphatically proclaimed, "*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*"

Whatever good happened to you this past week was designed to give you a foretaste of eternal blessing and a heart of increased gratitude to God

The difficulties of this past week

Amen?

Pray