

Nov. 3, 1013

The Christian's Greatest Personal Promise from God **Romans 8:28-30**

All Stand and Read Scripture

Romans 8:28-30

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

28 And we know that ^[a]God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become conformed to the image of His Son*, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Prayer

INTRODUCTION:

Last week we learned from I John several things that we can know:

1 John 5: 13

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may KNOW that you have eternal life.

- 1. We Can See God through His Creation**
- 2. We Know that God is in Control.**
- 3. We Can Know that We are Christian or a “Child of God”.**
- 4. We Know that God will Answer a Christians Prayer.**
- 5. We Know that a Christian does not Continue Sinning.**

6. We Know that Our Salvation is Through Jesus Christ.

7. We Can Know that We have Eternal Life with God”.

This morning I would like to reveal another thing that we can KNOW as a Christian.

Romans 8:28

And we know

This is **The Christian’s Greatest Personal Promise from God.**

ILLUSTRATION:

If I were to ask what the most favorite verse was in the New Testament, most would probably refer to John 3:16. But if I were to ask a Christian what the next favorite verse was, I suspect that many would suggest Romans 8:28 which says that all things work together for good for those that love the Lord.

When we or someone we know are experiencing a tough time in life, we are often encouraged by this verse.

I would like to share with you this morning, not only what it means, but also what it does **not** mean. Because, even though it is one of the most loved verses in the New Testament, I would like to make the case that it might also be one of the most misunderstood verses in the New Testament..

Romans 8:28

And we know that ^[a]God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

What does this scripture teach us?

BODY:

I. ALL Things Work Together for GOOD for Christians.

This is something we can have complete confidence in. You say “All things?” Yes, ALL THINGS!

A. This divine proclamation applies to ALL things.

What does all things mean? All things mean all things. “ALL things to work together for good to those who love God”.

When God says that everything works together for good, He includes things that we **LIKE**. But when God says that all things work together for good, He doesn't only mean the **GOOD** things; He also means the **BAD** things that happen in our life.

That includes things I like, it also includes things that I do not like. I do not know what you would consider a bad thing in your life.

It could be a **business failure**,
it could be a **death of a loved one**,
maybe you have been **diagnosed with some difficult illness**,
maybe you have a **house on the market that just won't sell**,
maybe you have some type of **personal problem** between you and a loved one, a parent, or a child, or a co-worker.

Even those bad things are included in the two words “ALL THINGS”. The Bible says that **all** things work together for **good**.

B. This divine declaration ensures us that all things work together for GOOD.

I don't want to focus on the word ALL here, now I want to focus on the word GOOD. **“All things to work together for GOOD to those who love God”.** What is God referring to here as GOOD?

Have you ever been in a discussion with someone that says “Well, I don't know, it is all good.” You know, that is a lie. This world is filled with evil. It is not all good. Good and evil are realities. The Christian position is not that everything is good. The Christian position is that the world is filled with good and evil.

So here is the blessing. God says that He will work all things (including the Evil things) together for Good. That's what God promises. God will even take things that are Evil and work them together for Good.

ILLUSTRATION:

I HATE cheese! There is something about the smell, the gumminess, and the taste of cheese that I cannot stand. I would just as soon eat a bowl of vomit, as I would to eat a piece of cheese. If you are the type of person who would order spaghetti in an Italian restaurant and would shake an 1/8" of parmesan cheese on top of the spaghetti, I would probably have to get up and leave the area. The smell of parmesan, for me, is terrible. But, I love pizza. If the pizza has melted mozzarella on it and the ingredients overpower the mozzarella, then it is fine. I will also eat a grilled cheese sandwich (if it is only one slice of mild cheese). The toast overpowers the taste of the Velveeta and makes it good.

So, what's the point. Cheese can be transformed into something that I like, like pizza.

God works the same way. He can take evil things and bad things and transform them into something that is good. This doesn't just HAPPEN. It isn't just faith. It is because there is a God in Heaven who is a GOOD God.

The Bible says that **"all things happen for good"**. It is because there is a God in Heaven who is a GOOD God. The New American Standard says that God CAUSES all things to work together for good. That is actually the "sense" of that verse. It's not that all things HAPPEN to work together for good. It is that God CAUSES all things to work together for good.

Who is this promise to?

C. This Devine Declaration is a Comfort for All Christians.

If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. If you have put your faith in His finished work on the cross at Calvary and you are trusting in Him and Him alone for your eternal salvation. Then this promise is for you.. It is for **"those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."**

Some people may say that they know they are a Christian, but they are not sure if they are someone that loves God and have been called according to His purpose. No. This is true of all Christians. Another word to refer to a Christian is the word CALLED. The word CALLED simply refers to someone who has received the gospel invitation and has accepted it.

In the new testament, the word CALLED never refers to a person that has received the gospel invitation and then rejected it. It always refers to a Christian that has accepted Christ as their personal Savior.

This is not referring to two types of Christians: One type that loves God and another type that is “called according to His purpose”. The Bible assumes that all Christians that have been called has received the invitation and accepted Christ as their savior AND love God. The two go together.

Jesus himself, said in John 8:42, to the unbelieving Jews, that: “if God were your father, you would love Me”.

Why, the assumption is that this is true of all believers.

**How can you come to the cross,
Experience the forgiveness of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and Walk away and say that you do not love God?
The Bible says this is not so.**

D. The Problem.

Here is the problem that we face: God promises that all things work together for GOOD for those that love the Lord.

What does the word GOOD actually mean? How do we define GOOD?

**For most of us GOOD means:
Financial Gain,
Material Gain,
Public Recognition,
Improved Health.**

ILLUSTRATION:

There is a story about a Christian student who has having trouble with his finances and needed to take a morning class so he could work in the afternoon to earn money to help pay his bills. It happened that the morning class became full, so the computer put him in an afternoon class. This meant that he would not be able to work in the afternoon and it was going to put him further behind on his bills. But he decided to attend the afternoon class. It turned out that a very attractive girl also attended that class who had a wealthy father. They dated and eventually married and her dad paid for all of his school bill!

So, all things worked together for good. Is this what this verse means? Well, I hate to tell you, but the answer is NO.

God has not promised that every time something bad happens, we are going to make a buck out of it. Then what does GOOD really mean.

II. The GOOD is a Conformation to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We often read that all things happen for good and we forget to read the verse after it.

Romans 8:29

29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

The **ULTIMATE** good is to be **CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF JESUS**.

If you are one to write in your Bible, go to Romans 8:28 and circle the word **GOOD** and then go to verse 29 and circle the word **CONFORMED** and draw a line connecting the two. That way you will never forget the context of Romans 8:28 again.

A. God does NOT declare that he works all things together to make Christians HEALTHY, WEALTHY, and WISE.

God actually does something better: He works all things together so that Christians will be **conformed to the image of Christ**.

God promises to take the things in my life, both good and evil, and somehow use them together in such a way to make me more like the Lord Jesus Christ. **THAT'S THE PROMISE OF GOD!**

ILLUSTRATION:

I have recently spent quite a bit of money on my Ford Escape SUV that has over 285,000 miles on it.. I had new brakes, a new #4 coil, a new catalytic convertor, and several other things fixed on it in order to get it running smoothly again. Now we are hearing a new scraping sound that sounds like we are driving with some large tread all-terrain tires.

But all things work together for good. What does that mean? Well, probably that means that someone will hear this story and take pity on me and buy me a new SUV. NO, that is not what it means.

What God is telling me is that by this SUV still not running right, the experience will:

Help me to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ.

It will help me to become more sanctified.

It will help me to allow Him to administer grace in my life.

B. To be CONFORMED means to change and become like someone else.

ILLUSTRATION:

When the Beatles came to America with their long hair, many of the teenagers and young adults started wearing long hair to be “like them”.

We are typically concerned about things we consider are GOOD. Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise.

God is not as concerned about giving us what we consider good things (even though He does give us many good things). God is more concerned with making us good children, making us good people. That is what He means in verse 29 to “be conformed to the image of His Son.”

ILLUSTRATION:

To be conformed to the image of His son is involving the word image and the word image was used when making Roman coins. How did you make a Roman coin back in the 1st century world?

You would take a round piece of metal and place it under a die that had been engraved with the image of the emperor’s head. You would take a heavy hammer and WHACK the die. When you pulled the round piece of metal from under the die, it would now have the image of the emperor’s head on it.

God is allowing us to go through adversity, and He is even allowing it to be WHACKED simply so that when the die is removed people will see the image of the Lord Jesus Christ in us. That is why God allows affliction in the life of a Christian.

Sometimes God takes us through affliction to help us to be more like His son.

We can be CERTAIN that if we are a Christian, we will end up being more like CHRIST. That is what verse 30 is about.

C.. The outcome is so certain that Paul writes of it as if it has already happened.

Romans 8:30

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Take a look at the words. We have **predestined** and **justified**. They are words that have happened in the past. Then we come upon the word **glorified**. It is also in the past tense.

You say, "Wait a minute, I have not been glorified. How can Paul say that I have been glorified when I am still alive?"

Because it is so certain to happen that the scripture refers to it in the past tense. It is a done deal. If you are a Christian, God will make you like His Son. That's a promise...The Christian's Greatest Personal Promise from God

This is the promise of Romans 8:28. All things work together for good for those who love the Lord. Not everything will be "good" as we think of "good". We will suffer afflictions and trials, but we can know that we will be conformed to be like Christ through these events (whether good or bad). Good is being conformed to be like the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Many of us suffer through trials. We get discouraged. We get bitter, we get angry. This is terrible.

2. Some of us believe Romans 8:28. We actually think that regardless of what we are dealt in life, something good is going to come out of this.
3. Very few of us really understand Romans 8:29 that the “good” is not getting the good “things”, but becoming like Christ.
4. Yet becoming like Christ is not the ultimate goal.

III The Ultimate Goal of Becoming Like Christ is to Exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:29b

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

Firstborn is a position of preeminence. It refers to priority. The fact that Jesus Christ existed before all things.

It means that becoming like Christ, brings Christ praise.

Colossians 1:16

New International Version (NIV)

¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

Everything was created by the Lord. He has supremacy over all things. Jesus reigns over all things. Jesus Christ truly is King.

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT:

So you say, “If you believe that is true, explain all of the evil in the world. I already have.

It is a hammer that is SMACKING on a die over believers. What God is doing is making Christ preeminent by conforming us to more like the image of His Son.

The ultimate Goal is to become TROPHIES OF GRACE.

ILLUSTRATION:

I will never forget having a perfect undefeated year in basketball my freshman year in high school. We were the Midgets. We had won all of our games that year and had to win the Princeton tournament to remain undefeated. I threw the ball in play and the team put a full court press on us. We had never faced a full court press. So the first couple of times that I attempted to pass the basketball into play, the other team intercepted it. We got around the problem by passing the basketball nearing the full length of the basketball court and getting easy layups. We received a first trophy for our win.

It is harder to relay this to the younger generation because now when they play sports everyone gets a trophy, whether they win a game or not because they want everyone to be a winner. But when I grew up you had to earn the trophy. The trophy had our school name on it and a basketball player shooting a basketball on the top.

The reason the trophy is important to me is not because of the value of the trophy or how pretty it is. When I look at that trophy, my mind goes back to the game in Princeton, Mo. where we won the trophy.

The trophy is supposed to direct your mind to somewhere else.

Do you know what is supposed to happen when you have been conformed to the image of Christ? People in your office, or your friends, or your family, everyone you are around is supposed to see you and have their mind directed someplace else.

Because God is at work in your life and He is using all things to work together for good in your life so you are more like the Lord Jesus Christ, so that as you become more like Christ,
people in your company,
in your business,
in your life
will say, "what is different about Johnny?"
You will be able to say that Johnny knows Jesus Christ.
Jesus will receive the preeminence.

Everything that happens in this world is for one reason and one reason only and that is to bring praise to our wonderful God. That

includes the good things and the bad things that have occurred in your life. God works all things together for good. If you are a Christian, you can count on that. Ultimate good is that you become like the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason God wants you to become like Christ, is so He can be glorified through your life.

2 Timothy 4:7-8

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;
⁸ in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

The Family of God

I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God.
I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,
For I'm part of the family, the family of God.