

Romans 8:28–30

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.

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.

“A Primer on Providence” Romans 8:28

INTRO:

Many years ago, several ladies from this church attended some meetings conducted by Verna Berkey. Several ladies had plaques from those meetings which I still see time to time in the houses I visit. These plaques simply contained the words of **1 Timothy 6:15** in the *Philips’* translation, **“God is the Blessed Controller of all things.”** As I understand it, these words were the core of what Verna Berkey taught. In fact, these words sum up in one simple sentence what providence is all about.

If we are to see providence in a nutshell, perhaps the best place to see it is in one of the most familiar verses in the New Testament – **Romans 8:28**. **“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.”** As we explore this verse together we will see it in two parts.

I. The Recipient of the Promise

II. The Wonder of the Promise

I. The Recipient of the Promise

A. First, we need to see this verse in its context. In **Romans 8** Paul wrote about why there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus **verses 1-5**. Then in **verses 6-17**, he told us why it is important we live our lives under the control of the Spirit of God. **Verses 16** and **17** are both the summary of the paragraph and the transition to where we live.

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 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.”

1. Why must we suffer with Christ in this present world? Paul answers with a promise and then a principle. The promise is **verse 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.”

The principle is found in **verses 19-25**. We live right now in a world that is under the curse and is waiting for the redemption of God. This world is hostile to us!

2. How do we know that we will make it through this hostile world? First, God gave us a helper in our prayer life, the Holy Spirit who prays for us (**vs.26-27**). Second, God pledged Himself to us in (**v.28**).

B. Too Whom is the promise given?

“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.”

If we were to look at this verse in the Greek text, we would find it looks quite a bit different from the English translation. In the Greek text it says,

“And we know that to the ones loving God, all things work together for good, to the ones who are called according to His purpose.”

1. The promise is a sandwich. Those to whom the promise is specifically made are the bread of the sandwich, and the promise itself is the meat. We begin by looking at those to whom the promise is made. First, the promise is for ***“those who are loving God.”***

2. Who then are they ***“who are loving God?”*** Perhaps it is best to begin with who they are not. These are not folks who are in their natural state, folks who are unsaved. Those who have not the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior are described in **Romans 3:10-12** as those who have no desire for God at all.

“As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none who understands. There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside. They have together become unprofitable. There is none who does good, no, not one.’”

In fact, earlier in **Romans 8**, we are told that the mind of the unbeliever is hostile toward God (**v.7**).

3. Therefore, those who are loving God are people who have been saved. The very words ***“loving God”*** speak of a continuing relationship with God Himself. Peter understood when the Lord Jesus Christ enters the life, He changes our hearts so we love Him.

1 Peter 1:7-8 ***“That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love.”***

C. The bottom slice of bread is the second description of those to whom the promise is made. ***“The ones who are called according to His purpose.”*** Who are the ones called according to His purpose?

1. The best way to know what the word **“called”** means is to look at how it is used in this context. In **verse 30** the word **“called”** means **“called to salvation.”** The calling in focus here is the calling to faith. God saved us to accomplish a purpose.

2. Not only do true believers live in a love relationship with the true and living God, we also have been called according to His purpose. In **Philippians 3**, Paul’s desire was to lay hold of the purpose for which God laid hold of him. God has an eternal purpose to accomplish and we are an integral part of that purpose.

D. So, the Apostle Paul told us clearly this blessing, this promise is just for the believer. It is ours if we know the Lord Jesus as our Savior. This is not a blessing for everyone. It is just for those who belong to Jesus.

II. The Wonder of the Promise

A. What is the blessing? **“All things work together for good.”** It could be translated, **“He works together all things for good.”** The identity of the **“He”** is self-evident. This is not some faceless fate that is at work. This is the all-wise, all-knowing, God of the universe who is personally weaving all things together for our ultimate good.

B. Paul brought into focus all the myriad of details, joys, and disappointments of life. As we look at the mountain tops and valleys, the momentous joys and flat tires of your life, we need to know every little event, every detail, good or bad, is under the control of our all-sovereign and all-wise God. And He is working out of all these events to accomplish an ultimate good. This includes the incredible and the mundane.

1. Paul did not say that each of these things are good in themselves. Remember the Apostle that wrote this endured much that was not good. When they dragged him out of Lystra and stoned him, he did not see that as good in itself. God has never promised us a life that is all good.

2. He also did not say that it was just the good things that God used to accomplish the good He has in mind. Remember the evil that came into the life of Job. God used the evil to produce a good result.

3. Notice, in the third place, that the good that God is working out of all of this is not defined by us. The good is defined by God Himself.

v.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.”

The ultimate good is His conforming us to the image of His Son. In short, God is busily working out our sanctification through His providence. He is working out His eternal purpose in our lives.

What do we do with this promise?

1. First, we need to make sure it is indeed our promise. Do you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior?

2. Second, we need to take hold of this promise in times of trouble. Crises do not announce themselves in advance. As James says, we suddenly fall into many faceted difficulties. They thrust themselves upon us without warning. What do we do when trouble comes? We take hold of this truth. Whatever the trial, it has come into our lives through the hands of our all loving and all wise heavenly Father Who is too loving to ever be unkind, and too wise to ever make a mistake.

1 Corinthians 10:13 *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*

Hymn #47 God Will Take Care of You