

All Things Work for Good (*Part 2*)

Romans 8:28-30

Thought for the Day: In all the circumstances of our lives, God is working to bring us into conformity to the image of His Son.

Romans 8:28 (*NIV*) – “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

This is a most remarkable promise that requires a great deal of faith on our part; faith in the sovereignty of God (that He is truly in control at all times); faith in the goodness of God (that He truly does desire to do us good and not harm); and faith in the power of God (that He truly can work in *all* circumstances to bring about His will and purpose). It requires faith to believe and faith to behave in a manner that demonstrates our belief that God is *always* working in our best interest.

This verse is “one of the favorite verses [of Christians] in [the book of] Romans. How often in times of trial have believers turned to Paul’s reassuring words that God has not deserted us but is at work in every circumstance of life? ...God directs the affairs of life in such a way that, for those who love him, the outcome is always beneficial.” (*The New American Commentary*)

I. THE PROMISE: “And we know that in all things God works for the good...”

- In the midst of trials and tribulations, there are times when we are tempted to doubt that God can bring good out of the situation.
- The testimony of Scripture is, “Yes, He can!” and “Yes, He will!”
- God is intimately, effectively and intentionally working in all the circumstances of our lives to bring about our good and our blessing.

II. THE CONDITION: “...of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

- This promise is only for those who love God, whom He has called into personal relationship with Himself according to His purpose.
- “All things worth mentioning are *against* those who do not love him: all his holiness and his justice and his power and his changeless law and his eternal judgment. But those who seek to do his will, those who accept his salvation, those who rest in his grace, can be sure of his loving care in the darkness as well as in the light, and can know that through all the mysteries of life he is perfecting a plan of eternal glory.” (*Charles Erdman, Romans, p. 93*)
- The call of God is essential and central to our salvation. (cp. vss. 29-30)
 - Salvation is the work of God from beginning to end, from eternity past to eternity future.
- No person comes to God whom He has not called to Himself.
 - “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13)
 - “God is not willing [or wishing] that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9; cp. John 3:16)

- Let us humbly recognize that in our sin and spiritual deadness to God, our “total depravity,” we would never come to Him if He did not first call us to Himself.
 - Romans 3:10-18; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 5:23-24; John 6:44, 63-65; Acts 16:14
 - “If anything of eternal significance happens, it’s because the Lord has done it!” Our spiritual depravity and wickedness prevent us from coming to God on our own. Therefore, God the Father must call us, draw us and enable us to come to Himself.
 - We cannot discover God on our own; He must reveal Himself to us. (Matthew 11:25-27)
 - Pride led to the downfall of Lucifer; it is humility that is required of us to hear and receive what God reveals to us so that we might be saved.
 - Peter did not discover the truth about Jesus on his own; God had to reveal it to him. (Matthew 16:15-17) In order for us to truly know God and have a personal, saving relationship with Him, He must reveal Himself to us.
 - The Lord’s invitation to come to Him is real and valid; we must respond to His call. (Matthew 11:28-30; John 12:32)
- There is no question that God’s work of salvation in our lives involves a great deal of mystery—there is much that we do not fully understand! (Deuteronomy 29:29)
 - But it should also be abundantly clear to us that God took the initiative in our salvation and that it is His work from beginning to end.
 - Our response, above all, should be one of humble gratitude for all that He has done, is doing, and will do on our behalf.
 - The question we must ask ourselves is, “Do I love God? Am I committed to Him, to His purpose, to His plan, to His kingdom?”

III. THE OUTCOME: “...God works for the good of those who love him...”

- We want “the good” to be our comfort but the truth is, “the good” God is working for is not our comfort but our conformity to the likeness of His Son. (Romans 8:29)
- God does not promise that we will avoid all of the trials and tribulations of life but He does promise that He will use them to make us more like Jesus. (James 1:2-4)
- We need to cooperate with and submit to the sanctifying ministry of the Holy Spirit and make it the ambition and work of our lives, as well. (2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Timothy 4:7-8)