

ROMANS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Romans chapter 8 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

This evening we will be picking up in verse 18 of Romans chapter 8 and we will finish up this chapter this evening.

As you may remember from our last study and our outline of the book of Romans, we see that Romans chapter 6 through Romans chapter 8 deals with our sanctification. We have seen that we are dead to sin and alive in Christ. Sin should no longer have dominion over us, lord over our lives because we are no longer in bondage to sin, a slave to sin.

That sounds great and it is but let's face it, we still struggle in these bodies of flesh, the spirit nature is at war with the flesh nature and it can become frustrating, discouraging at times as we seem to be losing these battles. The things we don't want to do we do and the things we want to do we don't do.

It is out of that frustration that Paul moves into Romans chapter 8 where he gives to us the power to live a life in the spirit and the power is given to us by the Holy Spirit, empowering us to be holy as the Lord is holy.

Paul put it like this in Romans 8:1-4, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”**

We are not only illuminated by the Holy Spirit to the Word of God, opening God’s Word up to us, but we are also empowered to live lives that are sanctified, set apart for God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is as Peter said in I Peter 2:11-12, **“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”**

And in Romans 8:11 Paul said, **“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”**

Paul is speaking of our spiritual resurrection that occurs when we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. That is what we have seen in the first seventeen verses of Romans chapter 8.

But, not only is there an immediate spiritual resurrection now, but also a physical resurrection of these bodies in the future, during the Rapture, when all believers will receive a new body, an eternal body and that is what Paul is now going to speak of as we move on in Romans chapter 8 this evening. Yes, we will endure suffering in this life, but glory awaits us!

Before we get to our text this evening, let me share this with you. We are told,

Sufferings cannot be compared to the glory that is yet to be revealed. Even the creation waits for the revelation of the sons of God, and it also groans to be released from its corruption. Believers in Christ also groan to be adopted. Because of human weakness, children of God do not know what to pray for, but the Spirit makes intercession with God for us. All things work together for good for those called of the Lord according to His purpose.

While we may be thrilled at being heirs of God and fellow heirs of Jesus Christ, there are consequences to our position that may not thrill us. Suffering is the necessary prelude to glory. The glory awaits us; the suffering is now.

- Woodrow Kroll, Romans – Righteousness in Christ, p. 135

I think the rest of this chapter puts things into perspective for us as we do suffer. And we need to have that correct perspective. I pray that as we go through these verses, it will help you as you live out your faith in this world.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Romans chapter 8 beginning in verse 18 as we study through His Word.

ROMANS 8**VERSE 18**

Remember what Paul said in Romans 8:16-17, **“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.”**

Paul is telling us that as Christians we will suffer before we are glorified just as Christ did. And in that it shows that we are joint heirs with Christ, children of God.

Now, here in Romans 8:18 Paul is saying that these sufferings are only temporary, they don't compare to what God has for us.

In other words, suffering prepares us for heaven, so we must prepare for suffering. And as Paul is telling these believers that they would suffer for Christ, the Holy Spirit is teaching us that we too will suffer for Christ!

Let me give you this example about a man named Richard Wormbrand. This man endured 14 years of imprisonment and torture in his homeland of Romania between 1948-1964. We are told,

He had led a secret underground ministry when the communists seized Romania and tried to control the church for their purposes. Wormbrand, like the apostle Peter stresses the tremendous need to get spiritually ready to suffer.

Listen to what he said, “What shall we do about these tortures? Will we be able to bear them? If I do not bear them I put in prison another 50 or 60 men whom I know because that is what the Communists wish from me to betray those around me.”

And here comes the great need for the role of preparation, he wrote, "It will be too difficult to prepare yourself for it when the Communists have put you in prison. I remember my last confirmation class before I left Romania. I took a group of 10-15 boys and girls on a Sunday morning, not to church but to the zoo.

Before the cage of lions, I told them, 'Your forefathers were thrown before such wild beasts for their faith. Know that you also will have to suffer, you will not be thrown before lions, but you will have to do with men who would be much worse than lions. Decide here and now if you wish to pledge allegiance to Christ.' They had tears in their eyes and they all said 'yes.'"

- Source Unknown

The cost of being a follower of Jesus Christ, you will suffer for your faith! One of the most powerful illustrations I have ever heard about the purpose and power of suffering in being a witness, comes from a story that Michael Card tells about a man named Joseph, who had come to Christ out of his Muslim religion. We are told,

One day Joseph who was walking along one of those hot dirty African roads met someone who shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with him. Then and there he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior and the power of the Holy Spirit began transforming his life. He was filled with such excitement and joy that the first thing he wanted to do was go back and return to his own village and share the same good news with the members of his local tribe.

Joseph began going from door to door telling everyone he met about the cross of Jesus and the salvation that it offered, expecting their faces to light up just as his had. To his amazement the villagers not only didn't care they became violent. The men of the village seized him and held him to the ground while the women beat him with strands of barbed wire. He was dragged from the village and left to die alone in the bush.

Joseph somehow managed to crawl to a water hole and there after days of passing in and out of consciousness found the strength to get up. He couldn't understand the hostile reception he had received from the people he had known all of his life. Finally he decided that he must have left something out or not told the story correctly.

So after rehearsing the message he decided to go back and share his faith again. He limped into the circle of huts and began to proclaim Jesus, "He died for you so that you might find forgiveness and come to know the living God."

And again he was grabbed by the men of the village and held while the women beat him reopening the wounds that had just begun to heal.

Once more they dragged him unconscious from the village and left him to die. To have survived the first beating was truly remarkable, to live through the second was a miracle.

Again days later Joseph awoke in the wilderness, bruised, scared and determined in his heart to go back.

He returned to the small village and this time they attacked him before he had a chance to open his mouth. As they flogged him for the third and probably the last time, he again spoke to them of Jesus Christ the Lord and before he passed out the last thing he saw was that the women who were beating him had begun to weep.

This time he awoke in his own bed, the ones who had so severely beaten him were now trying to save his life and nurse him back to health, and the entire village came to know Jesus Christ.

- Michael Card

Look at all the pain and all the suffering that this man went through, for what? So that he could be a witness of Jesus Christ to those around him and he was! I wonder how much pain and suffering we are willing to go through so that others might know Jesus, see Jesus in us?

Listen to what we are told in Acts 14:21-22 as Paul and his brethren endured tremendous suffering, persecution for their faith and they encouraged others what they would encounter for their faith. We are told, **“And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’”**

And Paul gives to us this perspective of things as he tells us in II Corinthians 4:16-18, **“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”**

If we truly appreciated, understood what God has for us, these sufferings would seem trivial to us! Don't give up, keeping moving forward knowing what is awaiting you, glorification as God presents you before His holy angels.

VERSES 19-22

Notice what Paul is saying here. That all of creation is eagerly waiting for the revealing of the sons of God.

Now that sounds strange because we are already sons of God, so what is Paul talking about?

Yes, we are sons of God now, but creation does not recognize that fact, in reality, they try to destroy it from their sight. But I don't think this anticipation is speaking of men as the creation but all of the creation, the animal's and-so-on.

And this verb, "**eagerly waits**" in the Greek, is ADEKDECHOMAI (ap-ok-ar-ad-ok-ee'-ah) and it is used several times in the New Testament to refer to the Lord's return.

So this can be translated that all of creation is "***on tip toes to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming to their own.***" The reason for this is given to us in Romans 8:20-22.

So all of creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God, but they are groaning because they are "**subjected to futility.**"

This word, "**futility**" speaks of emptiness, aimlessness, or uselessness. In other words, it can't reach a goal. It is unable to fulfill or achieve its purpose. It can't achieve its desired result.

What is Paul talking about?

Paul is saying that all of creation can't be what God intended it to be. All of creation can't live out its full potential and thus, it is crippled and frustrated!

This curse was placed upon them when Adam sinned, and the effects of that sin is seen throughout all of creation. As one writer put it, "The ground is cursed. Many wild animals die violent deaths. Disease afflicts birds and animals as well as fish and serpents. The results of man's sin have rippled like shockwaves throughout all creation."

But then Paul said, “**. . . because of Him who subjected it in hope.**”

What hope? Simply, that through all the pain and sorrow of this world, a world that is devastated by sin, that man would long for a world that God originally created. A world in which man and animals and all of creation could live in harmony together! That is what I long for and I am sure that is what you are longing for as well!

Remember that when God created the heavens and the earth everything was very good. Animals lived together in harmony; they were not meat eaters but vegetarians. But then sin entered the world through Adam and not only was Adam and all his descendants affected by this, but all of creation was also affected, as I have said.

That is what Paul has told us in Romans 5:12, “**Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.**”

But now creation waits for the day when the Lord will return and release them from the bondage of sin that is in this world and that has affected them.

Of this time, we are told in Isaiah 11:6-9, “**The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.**”

In Isaiah 35:1-2 we are told **“The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, The excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, The excellency of our God.”**

And in Hosea 2:18 we are told, **“In that day I will make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, With the birds of the air, And with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, To make them lie down safely.”**

Keep in mind that creation didn't ask for this, but because of man's sin they were affected by it. Now, they are standing on their tiptoes waiting for the revealing of the sons of God for when that occurs the Lord will return and set up His Kingdom on the earth.

This waiting Paul illustrates as a woman in childbirth. Now, how many of you fathers have pictures of your wife in labor?

Hopefully none of you because it is not a pretty picture, but I bet you do have pictures of the results of that labor, the birth of your child.

Now we have a picture of what the Kingdom Age is going to be like as God has told us, but it is just a glimpse of what it will be like and we can compare it to what we see now, what we might call labor pains and we too wait for the birth of the Kingdom Age, the return of Jesus! It is as Morris tells us, “Creation is not undergoing death pangs . . . but birth pangs.”

VERSES 23-25

First of all, how many of you groan in these bodies? I am sure we all do from time to time. Now I did not say whine or complain but we do groan. I guess we do whine and complain at times, but we should not be doing that!

And it is not just physical pain, the effects of sin on these bodies, but when Paul says, **“we ourselves groan within ourselves”** he is also speaking of what is manifested in these bodies of flesh, the sins that are born in our lives, the tragedies of nature and-so-on.

And I guess you can say that we too are standing on our tiptoes awaiting the redemption of our bodies but until that day, we groan!

Paul, in II Corinthians 5:1-8 tells us the same thing, **“For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”**

And not just groaning over what we do but we groan over seeing people we love sick, prodigal children, broken marriages, drive-by shootings and a lot of other problems we see and live with on a daily basis.

Of this Ray Stedman writes, “Our lives consist of groans. We groan because of the ravages that sin makes in our lives, and in the lives of those we love. Also we groan because we see possibilities that are not being captured and employed. And then we groan because we see gifted people who are wasting their lives, and we would love to see something else happening. It is recorded that, as He drew near the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus groaned in His Spirit because He was so burdened by the ravages that sin had made in a believing family. He groaned, even though He knew He would soon raise Lazarus from the dead. So we groan in our spirits – we groan in disappointment, in bereavement, in sorrow. We groan physically in our pain and our limitation. We consist of a great deal of groaning.”

Not a lot of hope in that but there sure is a lot of groaning. But let me give you hope, because Paul tells us, **“For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”** Romans 8:24-25.

What hope is Paul talking about?

Let me share this with you from Titus 2:13, where Paul tells us that we are to be, **“looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”**

In other words, we ain’t seen nothing yet! The best is yet to come! Because of this, we should not be getting frustrated, angry as we see and experience suffering in our lives. As we see all this pain in the world. This is only temporary suffering and one day it will give way to eternal glory!

You see, the glorious promise, our hope, is that Jesus Christ is coming back and when He does this body of flesh will be redeemed, the Lord will give to us a new body for our spirit and soul to dwell in. This world will be redeemed with all creation! Yes, we can’t see it now, but we are standing on our tiptoes waiting for this to occur.

Of this event, Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:50-58, **“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”**

I don’t know about you, but I am waiting for that day, the redemption of our bodies!

Also, that word, **“perseverance”** in verse 25 of Romans chapter 8, Morris tells us “It is the attitude of the soldier who in the thick of battle is not dismayed but fights on stoutly whatever the difficulties.” May we continue to do so – don’t lose that hope!

Our faith is in the Lord and the work He not only began in us, but will complete in us. You can never be removed or kicked out of the family of God, the adoption papers torn up, you can’t lose your salvation.

I know some struggle with this, but it is a work of God in us and the God who saved us can surely take us to glory one day! And we will see this played out at the end of this chapter.

It is as Thomas Watson, the Puritan Pastor, said regarding this issue, “The godly may act faintly in religion, the pulse of the affections may beat low. The exercise of grace may be hindered, as when the course of water is stopped. Instead of grace working in the godly, corruption may work; instead of patience, murmuring; instead of heavenliness, earthliness . . .

Thus lively and vigorous may corruption be in the regenerate; they may fall into enormous sins . . . [But] though their grace may be drawn low, it is not drawn dry; though grace may be abated, it is not abolished . . . Grace may suffer an eclipse, not a dissolution . . . A believer may fall from some degrees of grace, but not from the state of grace.”

If you don’t believe that then believe what Jesus said in John 5:24, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.**”

Notice that Jesus gives to us *EVERLASTING LIFE*, not a good chance of making it because it is based on His finished work, not ours!

VERSES 26-27

Not only does creation groan. Not only do we groan. But Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit also groans!

Why does the Holy Spirit groan?

Well, what the Holy Spirit is doing is groaning within us, in a sense, for those situations when we don’t know how to pray. Paul says He “**helps us in our weakness**” and it carries with it the idea of physical weakness, spiritual weakness, and even emotional weakness.

We don't know what to pray for, and we groan, and the Holy Spirit is making intercession for us in these prayers.

I have been there when I have groaned over a situation not knowing what to pray for and the Holy Spirit, knowing my heart, my weakness, interceded for me, He helped me to pray!

You see, our understanding of situations is limited, and thus, how should we pray for this situation? God has a plan and it is perfect and thus, when we pray we want God's will to be done.

What happens many times in our prayers is we are directing God what to do! Not a good idea.

Think about a situation where someone is asking for money or a job or this or that, should you pray for them to get the money, the job, this or that? Maybe God is trying to bring them to a certain point and by you interceding, maybe giving them money or a job or whatever, you are getting in the way of what God wants to do!

We need to be careful and seek God's will in our prayers and our actions. And again, I don't know if you have been there, but there have been times I am so overwhelmed in a situation and not sure what to pray for, and I just groan. And I truly believe the Holy Spirit is interceding for me because He knows just what I need to pray for!

And the word "helps" carries with it the idea of helping another to carry a heavy load. It goes beyond my ability to express in words what is needed in a situation. Is this the gift of tongues? I don't believe so, for tongues is a praise language unto God.

This is prayer and I believe those times we are just groaning unto the Lord, it is the Spirit that is interceding, as I have said.

VERSE 28

First of all, we don't know all things, that is a given I think.

But, there are certain things that we need to know, and these things can be known to us.

There are certain foundational truths that we need to know, we need to understand, or our concept of God will be off.

Why is this so important to us? Because in life we are going to face many challenges, many difficulties, many situations that are very difficult and hard to understand!

In fact, we may say things like, "God, what are you doing?" or "God, why are you allowing this in my life?" or "God, if you really love me, why are you doing this to me?" And in the end, we may never know why God allowed a certain situation in our life!

But, here is one thing that I do know. "**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.**" Romans 8:28.

What many do with this verse is they like to share it with people who are going through a difficult time, a real storm of life, but it is not for all people!

That statement may shock some of you, but Paul tells us that this is for Christians, not the unsaved. It is for those who love God!

Let me say this, throughout some thirty-seven years of being a Christian this verse I have held onto and I still hold onto. I may not understand the good that will come out of the situation, but I believe it by faith, I know it intuitively!

When Paul speaks of all things working together, that phrase "**work together**" is SUNERGE in the Greek and it is a word from which we get our English word "synergism."

It is a word that means “the working together of various elements to produce an effect greater than, and often completely different from, the sum of each element acting separately.”

A great example of this is table salt, which is composed of two poisonous chemicals. Sodium and chlorine but together they produce a chemical that is extremely beneficial, sodium chloride or table salt!

Also, I want you to see this, it is important. Notice what Paul says once again, “***And we KNOW . . .***” That is important. Paul doesn’t say, “***And we SEE . . .***” He doesn’t say, “***And we FEEL . . .***”

Why is that? Because we don’t always see the good that will come out of a difficult situation. And we don’t always feel that what is happening is for our good!

But we can ***KNOW!*** How can we know that all things are going to work together for good? Because this knowledge is rooted in our understanding of God Himself and it is based upon His Word.

Too often we let our circumstances influence what we believe about God instead of allowing what we believe about God to influence the way we look at our circumstances!

So what do we know about God? First of all, our ***GOD IS SOVEREIGN!*** He is in control and He has a plan and what He does is perfect for our lives. If we can believe that it truly leads to the next point about our God!

The second thing we know about God is that ***GOD LOVES ME!*** That is important to understand. God is not out to hurt us but to help us to grow. And His love for us is unconditional, it is ***AGAPE*** love! And we should be so thankful for that!

And lastly, and we could go on, but these should help get our focus corrected about God and the situations we face if it is off. The last one is that ***GOD HAS INFINITE WISDOM!*** He knows all things and I don't, you don't! That is important because if God knows all things, and He does, then what He does will be perfect for our lives! And it truly is because, "**... we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**" Romans 8:28.

Donald Grey Barnhouse puts this in perspective for us as he wrote,

In his Bible an elderly minister carried a bookmark that was made of silk threads woven into a motto. The back of it was a tangled web of crossed threads that seemed to be without reason or purpose. When he called in some home where there was great trouble, sorrow or death, he would frequently show this bookmark, presenting the reverse side with all its unintelligible tangle. When the bereaved one had examined it intently, without finding any explanation for the seeming disorder, the minister would ask him to turn the marker over. Immediately, against the white silk background there was the phrase, in colored threads, "God is love." That side made sense. It is thus with all of the tangled patterns of life for the one who has been called according to the divine plan. When we know this fact, we can be at peace with the world around us because we are at peace within our own souls because we are at peace with our Heavenly Father.

- Donald Grey Barnhouse

So, when you come up against those things that you don't know, then just fall back on what you do know. God is working. He is going to work out His plan. And it will be perfect even if we don't fully understand it.

Now some may wonder why God allows those difficult times in our lives?

It is not to hurt us but to help us to grow, strengthen our faith, draw us closer to God, protect us from other tragedies and ultimately, conforming us into His image.

For some, this is hard to believe. How can God turn a tragedy into good?

Let me give you the ultimate example of how God can do this.

God sent His Son into the world to save the world by going to the cross of Calvary, taking all that Satan could devise and turned God's people against Jesus, turned the Gentiles against Jesus, and it looks like all things are not working together for good, but for evil.

But that was not the case as we know because we can look back and see what took place, the good that came out of it.

You see, out of that evil that was thrown at Jesus came the ultimate gift, eternal life, eternal salvation, the forgiveness of our sins!

God is working in us for good – ultimately, even though in the here and now we may not see it or fully understand it. But we can ***KNOW IT!***

VERSES 29-30

Remember what we read in Romans 8:28, that all things are working together for good. If that is true, and it is, then nothing can work for our ultimate bad or our condemnation.

What does that have to do with these verses? Everything!

Paul is showing us our security in our salvation. You see, if there was even one single Christian who lost their salvation, then this verse would be a lie. Not all things were working together for good!

That means if you are justified, saved, you must of necessity by the promise of God come all the way to future glorification. The work that God began in you, your salvation, He will complete, your glorification!

I realize that there are many who are teaching that you are saved by faith and then you need to live a certain way to maintain your salvation. And depending on what group it is that you belong to, the list of prohibitions that are required for living a holy life can be quite long and cumbersome.

That is a works theology and it is not what God has said in His Word. If you are saved for real, then you are saved ***FOREVER!***

And look at these verses once again. Paul is showing us that every person who is genuinely saved is eternally saved, they cannot lose their salvation. It is a free gift of God that He does not take back.

Look at what Paul is saying here. First of all, God *foreknew* us, which should be no surprise, He knows everyone that has ever been born or ever will be born.

We are told of Jeremiah the prophet, “**Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.’**” Jeremiah 1:4-5.

Here in Romans Paul is speaking of those who are believers or will be believers He foreknew, and He foreknew us with a purpose in mind.

That purpose was to *predestine* us to be conformed to the image of His Son!

Now if we are predestined to be saved, why witness, why do anything, for if you are going to be saved there is nothing you can do to stop it and if you are not going to be saved then there is nothing you can do to be saved! That is Reformed Theology and it is wrong!

I believe that is an unhealthy and unbiblical position to take regarding predestination. I truly believe the Scriptures teach that it is 100% predestination and 100% free choice for us to choose for the Scriptures speak of both and I don't believe it is 50% of each!

I know, that doesn't make sense; I have to agree with you on that. But God never said to us that we have to fully understand it with our finite minds but that we would believe it by faith!

Think of it like this, I believe it was Ironside who gave this illustration of free will and predestination.

When you die you arrive in the afterlife and you see a door, which says, "*All who will may enter.*"

And as you open the door and enter in you see a huge and beautiful banquet table all set for a feast and names at every place setting. Now, to your surprise, as you look at the names on the cards you find your name.

As the door begins to close you notice on the inside of the door a sign that says, "*predestined before the foundations of the world.*"

I think that is the correct perspective of free will and predestination, at least to try to understand it with our human minds!

So as God's plan of redemption continues in our lives, predestination leads to our *calling*. He not only calls us to saving faith but God has a plan for each of our lives and as He calls, we are to walk. He has not only prepared the work for us, but He has prepared us for the work.

After God calls us, we then are *justified* by Him, declared innocent before Him. It is as Paul said in Romans 3:24, "being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Lastly, He not only *foreknew* us, *predestined* us, *conformed* us, but He *called* us, *justified* us, and He also *glorified* us.

This is the final step of the sanctification process and it will occur when we go to be with the Lord and yet Paul states this work, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is in the past tense.

Why does Paul speak of something that has not happened as if it already did? Because that is how sure it is, God will complete the work He started because He foreknew us!

It is as Jesus said in John 6:37, “**All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.**”

And in John 18:9 we are told by Jesus, “**. . . ‘Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.’**”

If you are His, He will not lose you – it is a promise – you are already seen as glorified in the Father’s eyes – that is how certain it is, that is how secure we are in our eternal redemption!

VERSE 31

This is a tough one for some to believe. We tend to think the whole world is against us, but that is not a true statement. 99.9% of the world may be against you but if you are in Christ, it doesn’t matter, for He is on your side and Paul is going to tell us that nothing is going to be able to destroy the love that God has for us! Yes, the world, the flesh and the Devil are against us, but they are no match for God – remember that fact!

And yet, as some get swept up into legalism, they think God loves them one minute and then they blow it and God doesn’t love them anymore! That is not what Paul is saying.

I like the way that Newell put it. He said, “Our weak hearts, prone to legalism and unbelief, receive these words with great difficulty: God is for us . . . They have failed Him; but He is for them. They are ignorant; but He is for them. They have not yet brought forth much fruit; but He is for them.”

May we all believe that fact, God is for us and no one can be against us and win! How do we know that? What is the evidence? Look at the next verse.

VERSE 32

God has given to us the ultimate gift, the best gift, His Son to pay in full the penalty for our sins while we were still sinners, in rebellion against God. If that is true, and it is, then God will surely take care of the other issues in our lives – God is for us!

This picture here that Paul is painting is from greater to the lesser. Think about it again, because it is easy to lose sight of this and I want to drive this point home.

If Jesus could do the greater, that is saving us through His death, then can't He do the lesser, which is keeping us saved through until the end? Of course He can and Paul is going to continue to drive that point home!

VERSES 33-34

Think about this for a minute. We are secure from every charge against us. If we are declared “*not guilty*” by the highest Judge, Almighty God, who can bring an additional charge against us? No one can!

One writer put it like this. He wrote, “It greatly clarifies the argument of this verse and the following one if we supply the words ‘No one, because . . .’ before each answer. Thus this verse would read, **Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? No one, because it is God who justifies.** If we do not supply these words, it might sound as if God is going to bring a charge against His elect, the very thing that Paul is denying!”

You see, we are justified and because of that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, and so God does not bring these things against us.

I know, some of us or maybe all of us from time to time, let the Devil beat us up in this area. But if God, who is the Supreme Judge of the whole world has acquitted us, if He has pronounced us not guilty who can bring anymore legal charges against us? No one and thus, the case is **CLOSED!** We have been pronounced **NOT GUILTY** by God Himself!

But the Devil does like to beat us up as we are told in Revelation 12:10, which says, **“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.’”**

Also, even though the Devil may be our accuser, look at who is on our side as Hebrews 7:25 tells us, **“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”**

Thus, if God is for us, then who can be against us? **ABSOLUTELY NO ONE!**

VERSES 35-37

When Paul says that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ, he is speaking of the love relationship we entered into when we received Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

In other words, Paul is using “**the love of Christ**” as a synonym for salvation.

Then how come we feel at times or should I say don't feel the love of Christ in our lives?

Because we don't believe what Paul has stated here!

God's love is constant towards us, it is unconditional, we may lose the perspective of that truth, but it doesn't change God's love for us. And as we apply this to our lives we become more than conquerors over the world, the flesh and the Devil, not by our strength but by His working in us and through us knowing nothing can separate us from the love of God!

But what happens when tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, perils or the sword come upon our lives? We think Jesus has forsaken us or that He doesn't love us anymore. Is that true? No! But we think that if Jesus really loved me then I would not be going through these painful experiences!

We have lost the correct perspective of things and we have let situations confuse us about the love of God for us.

When Chrysostom was brought before the Roman Emperor, the Emperor threatened him with banishment if he remained a Christian. Chrysostom replied,

“Thou canst not banish me for this world is my father’s house.” “But I will slay thee,” said the Emperor. “Nay, thou canst not,” said the noble champion of the faith, “for my life is hid with Christ in God.” “I will take away thy treasures.” “Nay, but thou canst not for my treasure is in heaven and my heart is there.” “But I will drive thee away from man and thou shalt have no friend left.” “Nay, thou canst not, for I have a friend in heaven from whom thou canst not separate me. I defy thee; for there is nothing that thou canst do to hurt me.”

May we be able to echo those words because we believe what the Bible says, that God is for us, no one can be victorious against us, there are no charges that can be brought against us because we have been set free by Jesus and thus, no matter what comes our way, we are more than conquerors through Him because He loves us unconditionally and eternally!

Now, in Romans 8:37, when Paul says that we are, “**more than conquerors**” what does he mean? First of all, this comes from the Greek word, HUPERNIKAO, (hoop-er-nik-ah’-o). And it is made up of two Greek words, HUPER, which means “more than, super.” And, NIKAO, which means “victors, conquerors.”

Paul is not speaking of us overcoming these things in our lives but that in these trials, in these tribulations that we face, we see the hand of God at work using these things to shape and build and strengthen our lives!

The trials are making us stronger in our faith and relationship with God so that in Christ we can be ***more than conquerors!***

How important that is for us to understand? It is very important and there are a few verses that we see this played out.

In Romans 5:3-5 Paul tells us, “**And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**”

In II Corinthians 12:9-10 Paul tells us, “**And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**”

In James 1:2-4 James tells us, “**My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**”

And in I Peter 5:8-11 Peter tells us, “**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**”

What does that mean? It means that, “**. . . we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**” Romans 8:28. So we are in a battle, it is like being sheep led to slaughter and yet, God is with us, and He will see us through these things as He is working to shape our lives, build us up, strengthen us in the faith!

Now Paul brings us to the pinnacle, the climax of the first 8 chapters of the book of Romans. He is going to summarize everything he has said about the believer's security in Christ in a final exhaustive triumphant declaration of absolute certainty.

VERSES 38-39

What Paul is attempting to do is to lump together every conceivable possibility in all of creation that anyone could think of that might tear us away from God and send us to hell.

But the conclusion that Paul brings us to is, ***“If God is for us then nothing in this universe is going to take us from Him, His love just will not let us go.”*** In other words, nothing, no one can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus! And in knowing that, it should give to each of us a security regarding our salvation!

Spurgeon put it this way in regard to the love of God as the great men and women of faith had. He said, “They did not speak of Christ’s love as though it were a myth to be respected, a tradition to be revered; they viewed it as a blessed reality, and they cast their whole confidence upon it, being persuaded that it would bear them up as upon eagles’ wings, and carry them all their days; resting assured that it would be to them a foundation of rock, against which the waves might beat, and the winds blow, but their soul’s habitation would stand securely if founded upon it.”

May we not forget that! If God is for us – who can be against us? Absolutely no one! And I will close with this. You are saved by grace! You are sustained by grace! And one day you will be carried all the way to glory by God’s **AMAZING GRACE!**