

Grace Inherent in Romans 8:28

Grace—part 8

August 18, 2019

This week, we'll study one of the most famous and well-loved verses in all the bible.

Romans 8:28 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.

²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

DAY 1: Certainty amidst uncertainty

*Romans 8:28 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.*

1. “We know...”
2. The bible tells us elsewhere that God’s purposes cannot be thwarted no matter what evils any person or mankind may commit. When we are in heaven that will be crystal clear.
3. But here, Paul tells us we don’t have to wait for heaven to know that truth. He says we can “know” that truth now!
4. What is it we can know? Re-write Romans 8:28 in your own words.

5. Its one thing to “know” in our heads that God is working His good purposes for our good. But, there are times when it sure doesn’t seem that way and doesn’t feel that way. It may be impossible to even think of any good that could come out of our most difficult seasons of life!
6. While **there is something we can know**, there are **some things we cannot know**. Notice the verse that comes just two verses before our verse on certainty!
Romans 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.
7. What is it we “don’t know?”

8. We know the outcome will be good (Rom. 8:28), while in the present we may be bamboozled, confused, baffled, and at a loss for any words, including words with which to pray (Rom. 8:26)
9. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 2: "... in all things..."

*Romans 8:28 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.*

1. Let's be clear about what Paul is not saying:

- a. Paul is not saying that "all things" are good. Evil is not good. Death is not good.
- b. Paul is not saying that things will necessarily turn out the way we want.

2. What initially strikes you about "all things"?

3. Paul is not advocating "positive thinking." He is not a "head in the sand" optimist. He is not advocating pretending that life is not difficult, sometimes involving suffering. Recall what Paul says just a few verses before Rom. 8:28.

*Romans 8:18 I consider that our **present sufferings** are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

²⁰ *For the creation was subjected to **frustration** ...*

²² *We know that the whole creation has been **groaning** as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

²³ *Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, **groan inwardly** as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

5. Paul is clear about the reality of suffering.

6. How then, are we to think about God using "all things" for our good while at the same time going through suffering?

7. Perhaps we can think of "sufferings" and "all things" in this way. In spite of the sufferings we undergo, God will work out our eternal good in ways we can never imagine.

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 3: "... works (together)..."

Romans 8:28 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.

1. The verb, "works" comes from the Greek word, "sunergeo". The literal English translation for this Greek word is "synergy".

- a. Synergy means things and/or people working together.
- b. Synergy can mean that the sum of the parts is greater than the parts themselves.

2. Every Sunday, I watch our worship team utilize "synergy." The sum is greater than the parts. We have some talented musicians and some talented singers. As each musician and singer submits himself or herself to the overall purpose of making music together and leading others to worship God, each part takes on greater meaning than any solo act.

3. God works together every aspect of our life, both:

- a. Great and small.
- b. Pleasant and painful.
- c. Monumental and seemingly trivial.
- d. Success and failure.
- e. Accomplishment and disappointment.
- f. Loyalty and betrayal.
- g. Selfishness of others and my own selfishness.
- h. International, global events and local events.
- i. Marital joys and marital heartaches.
- j. Parental joys and parental heartaches.
- k. Financial blessing and financial "challenges."
- l. In sickness and in health.

4. How God does this "working together" is one of the great mysteries of life. It involves many more people in our lives than we imagine, and many more "shaping events" in our lives than we imagine.

5. What is readily apparent is that we do not need to know how God "works together" everything for our good. If it was important for us to know that He would have told us! Instead, something greater is at stake: taking God as His word!

6. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 4: "... for the good ..."

Romans 8:28 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.

1. This begs the question, "What is 'good'?"

2. In my life before coming to Christ, I think I defined what was good along these lines:
 - a. That which made me feel better.
 - b. Desires of which I was aware being met the way I wanted them met.
 - c. That which made my life easier or more pleasant.
 - d. That which sated my pride.

3. The verses that follow Romans 8:28 give us some of the "good" God is doing in us.

Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

4. God is working to "conform" His children "to the likeness of His Son." He is building Christlikeness into us. He is shaping our:
 - a. Fundamental purpose
 - b. Attitudes,
 - c. Values,
 - d. Priorities,
 - e. Relational priorities
 - f. Relationships. He is teaching how to love people, both those easier to love and those more difficult.
 - g. Character.

5. This work is a gargantuan task. When we begin our Christian life we have little idea how self-centered we are, entitled, demanding, expecting, and committed to our own needs being met over every others' needs.

6. Paul tells us that this process will continue right up until we take our final breath here on earth. At that moment we will be "glorified," meaning, we will be fully like Christ in all of those items mentioned in #4.

Philippians 1:6 (RSV) And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: The promise...

*Romans 8:28 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**.*

1. There are two different kinds of biblical promises.

a. Conditional.

These promises usually involve an “If” and a “then.” For example:

*2 Chronicles 7:14 ... **if** my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, **then** will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

b. Unconditional.

These promises are actions God commits Himself to regardless of the obedience or disobedience of people. All of God’s Old Testament covenant promises to bring a Messiah to die for our sins are unconditional.

2. Romans 8:28 is a **conditional** promise. The promise has two conditions:

a. “to those who love God,” and

b. Those who are called according to His purpose.

3. These two conditions are roughly the same thing but seen from two different perspectives.

a. “Those who love God” is seen from our human point of view.

b. Those “who have been called according to His purpose” is seen from a divine point of view.

4. As we seek to deepen our love for God and align ourselves with His purposes we stand on the grand promise of Romans 8:28.

5. We will never love God perfectly, nor will we align ourselves with God’s purposes perfectly. But, as we continue to pursue Him, in the intent of our heart, we may relax in the goodness of God and the sovereignty of His working toward our ultimate and eternal good!

6. What strikes you from today’s devotional.