

# The All Things of Romans 8:28

*By Pastor Art Watkins*

Romans 8:28 says: ***And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.***

Next to John 3:16, Romans 8:28 is probably one of the most quoted verses of scripture in the Bible. It is a verse that millions of saints have found comfort and assurance in. It's a promise that soothes our hearts and minds in the midst of pain, sorrow, sickness and death. It's like a soft pillow for a weary head. Many a Christian has claimed Romans 8:28 as a prayer promise when unexplained things happen in their life. I have claimed it many times.

The common interpretation of Romans 8:28 is all things means everything, including bad things. It's true that God can take something bad and turn it into something good. God can take life's lemons and turn them into lemonade. Fanny Crosby is probably the best hymn writer of all time. She wrote some of the greatest hymns ever written. This modern contemporary, charismatic 7-11 music (7 words 11 verses) can't hold a light to her songs of praise. But what many people do not know is that she was blind. When she was young a doctor made a mistake when operating on her eyes that left her blind most of her life. The doctor who made the mistake grieved for years for what he had done to Fanny. Late in life she happened to meet the doctor and he began to weep and apologize for what he had done. But she stopped him and said that had it not been for her blindness she could have never written the beautiful hymns she wrote. This is an example of how God can take something bad and make it work together for our good.

But, even though God can make bad things work together for our good, the all things of Romans 8:28 is not everything. Sin never works together for our good. Idolatry, adultery, fornication, lying, stealing, covetousness work against us, not for us. The consequences of sin are always bad and no good can come from sin. Sin pays wages and the wages is always bad. The all things of Romans 8:28 do not include sin.

The all things of Romans 8:28 must be interpreted by its context. A text without a context is a pretext. Romans 8:28 must be interpreted by the verses that precede it and those that follow after. The all things that work

together for our good in Romans 8:28 are found in this chapter. There are a number of blessings and promises in this chapter that work together for our good and they are the *all things* of Romans 8:28.

### **Freedom from the Condemnation of the Law**

Romans 8:1 says; ***There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.***

The condemnation in this verse is the eternal condemnation of the law. In chapter 7 Paul writes about the law and how it condemns those who break it. The law does not save today, but it still condemns those who transgress it. But according to Romans 8:1 there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. The law cannot condemn them even though they broke the law. Why? Because the law condemned Christ in our behalf. The wrath of the law was poured out on Christ. He suffered for every commandment we broke and we broke all of them. We deserve to be condemned to hell for breaking the law. But God in his love punished Christ on the cross for what we did. We did the crime, but he paid the fine. We broke the law, but he suffered the penalty. Once a person trusts Christ as their savior God puts them in Christ and he counts his death as theirs. Galatians 3:13 says; ***Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.***

Christ allowed the law to curse him, condemn him, and execute him in our place. That is why there is no condemnation to those in Christ. If you are in Christ the law has already condemned you when it condemned him. Once the law condemns a man it has no more power over him. We are dead to the law, and the law can't do anything to a dead man. Freedom from the eternal condemnation of the law is one of the things that work together for our good in Romans 8:28.

### **The Indwelling Spirit of God**

Romans 8:9 says: ***But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.***

When a person is born again they receive three things from God; his life which is eternal; his nature which is divine, and his Spirit who is Holy. By receiving the Spirit believers become the temple of God according to 1 Cor.6:19 and the habitation of God in Eph.2:22. They also become a part

of Christ's body; are given a guarantee of resurrection according to Romans 8:11; are led by the Spirit according to Romans 8:14; have an inner witness of salvation according to Romans 8:16; and intercession by the Spirit in verse 26. For these reasons and more the indwelling Spirit of God is one of the all things that work together for our good in Romans 8:28.

### **The Adoption of the Father**

Romans 8:15-16 says: ***For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.***

Adoption works together for our good because:

(a) It makes us a child of God

Ephesians 1:5 says; ***Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.***

God has only one begotten Son, all the rest are adopted. Being born again does not make you a child of God, adoption does. But an adopted Son is as much a son as a begotten son. He is not a lesser son than a begotten son. All of God's adopted sons are placed on equal footing and standing as his begotten Son. An adopted son can cry Abba Father just like a begotten son. He has as much claim to the Father as a begotten son.

(b) It makes us an heir of God

Galatians 4:7 says; ***Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.***

The children in God's house are heirs to his inheritance. The inheritance of God the Father has been passed down to all of his adopted sons. What's his has become ours. If you are an adopted son of God you have inherited God the Father's; righteousness, Spirit, grace, love, peace, mercy, word, power, wisdom, kingdom, gifts, glory, promises, comfort, holiness, life, armor etc. We have this inheritance now. It is free. We cannot lose it. It cannot be changed and it is not subject to an inheritance tax.

### **The Suffering of the Saints**

Romans 8:17-18 says: ***And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.***

Suffering is one of the bad painful things of Romans 8:28 that work together for our good. That does not seem possible, but it is true. But how does suffering work together for our good?

(a) It is through suffering we gain patience, experience and hope.

Romans 5:3-5 says; ***And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope.***

(b) Suffering will work together for our good in the future because all suffering for Christ's sake in this life will be rewarded and the reward will exceed the suffering.

2 Corinthians 4:17 says: ***For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.***

2 Timothy 2:12 says: ***If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.***

When you compare the glory of the rewards with the suffering it took to gain them, the glory will far out weigh the suffering. God always gives us more than what we deserve. The rewards will exceed the suffering a million times. The rewards will be so glorious that most Christians will regret they didn't suffer more and that they didn't have but one life to suffer. And a lot of Christians will regret not suffering at all.

### **The Manifestation of the Sons of God**

Romans 8:19-21 says: ***For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.***

The whole creation, including us, is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. The sons of God are the angels and saints who will come with Christ at his second coming. The manifestation of the sons of God at the second coming of Christ is the hope of the whole creation because then and only then will we be delivered from the bondage of corruption. The bondage of corruption is the curse we suffer as a result of Adam's sin and our own sins. By the sin of Adam and our own sins we became subject to the bondage of corruption. Sin cursed the whole creation, man, plant and animal. We all suffer for what he did. Sin touched every area of our lives. Sin brought death to our spirit, soul and body. Sin corrupted our hearts, minds, emotions, understanding, thoughts and our bodies. We suffer

damage to every part of our body, soul and spirit. But when the sons of God are manifested at the second coming of Christ the whole creation will be delivered from the curse and corruption and damage of sin. This is one of the all things of Romans 8:28 that will work together for our good in the future.

### **The Intercession of the Spirit**

Romans 8:26-27 says: ***Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.***

We have an infirmity in our flesh. It's the old nature of sin that dwells in our flesh according to Rom.7. It has clouded our minds and understanding as to how to pray and what to pray for as we ought. (See Rom.7:19-21) Many times in our lives we are faced with problems, circumstances and tragedies that completely overwhelm us. We are confused as to why they happen. They are so overwhelming that we don't know how we should pray about them. They confuse us and bewilder us to the point of despair.

There were many times during my son's sickness that I could not pray. As we watched him get worse I had a hard time knowing what to pray for. His sickness so overwhelmed me that there were times I would get down to pray and could not say a word. I have never felt so helpless in my life.

When you are overcome by grief and despair it is very hard to understand the will of God. It seems like God vanishes from the universe. You can't see his hand or sense his love or compassion. But the Spirit knows what God is doing at all times and he knows why things happen the way they do. He knows our real needs at a time like that. And he helps our infirmities by teaching us how and what to pray for as we ought. I have noticed that people who have gone through pain and tribulation in their lives have a more powerful and spiritual prayer life than others. The Spirit intercedes for them and assists and teaches them how to pray and what to pray for. And when they pray it's according to the will of God and not theirs. (Matt.26:39-44)

## The Election of God

Romans 8:29-33 says: ***For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.***

These verses give us a full picture of the whole process of election. There is more than one part to election and each part works together for our good.

The whole process of election or predestination begins with ***foreknowledge***. It means to have knowledge of something before it happens. Only God has foreknowledge for only God knows the future. What did God foreknow that caused him to predestinate or elect you who are saved? He foreknew you would believe the truth of the gospel when you heard it. 2 Thessalonians 2:12-13 says: ***That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.***

In these verses both damnation and election are based upon faith.

Those who do not believe the truth are damned according to verse 12. Those who believe the truth are chosen and saved according to verse 13. Those who God foreknew would believe the gospel he chose and the ones he foreknew would not believe the gospel he did not chose. It's just that simple. (All men have the ability to believe or reject the gospel. If not, how could God condemn a man for not believing if he could not believe, or if God did not "give him faith to believe" as some teach)

Foreknowledge works together for our good for those he foreknew he ***predestinated***. Predestination works together for our good for it means that God elected or chose you. The ones who he predestinated are the ones he elected.

Predestination also works together for your good, for those who God predestinated he ***called***. The gospel is an open invitation for all men to be saved. Even though God calls all men to be saved by the gospel, only "the called" answer. "The called" are those God predestinated. The ones he predestinated are those he foreknew would believe the gospel.

Being one of the called works together for our good because the ones he called he **justified**. We are justified when we answer God's call to believe the gospel. Justification works together for your good for;

(1) Only the justified have peace with God

Rom.5:1 says; **Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

(2) Only the justified are delivered from the wrath of God

Rom.5:9 says; **Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.**

(3) Only the justified are heirs of eternal life

Titus 3:7 says; **That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

(4) Only the justified are forgiven of all sins

Acts 13:39 says; **And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses**

(5) Only the justified are glorified

Rom.8:30 says; **Whom he justified them he also glorified.**

The last step in the process of election is **glorification**. If you have been elected you have a guarantee you will be glorified. That is the reason the word is used in the past tense, for as far as God is concerned it's a done deal. To be glorified means you will be totally conformed to the image of God's Son according to verse 29. The main goal in election is to conform you into the image of God's Son. His will is to make you like Christ in every way: body, soul and spirit. When we are conformed into the image of his Son the whole process of election will be completed.

The all things of Romans 8:28 includes the election of God and every part in the process of election works together for our good. The blessed Trinity has, is, and will work all things together for our good. God is in us and for us and he is actively working things together for our good. It may not seem that way at times, but he is.

In view of Romans 8:28 Paul asks the following questions.

***If God be for us who can be against us? (Verse 31)***

God has demonstrated that he is for us throughout this chapter. If the Godhead is on your side working all things together for your good, who can be against you? Who is greater than God? If they come against you, they will come against God.

***How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Verse 32)***

In view of what God has done, is doing and will do, should there be any doubt that he can supply our every need? If God went as far as to give up his prize possession on the cross for us, will he close his hand and shut his ear to our temporal needs now? If the cross is any indication of what God will do for us we need not worry about house notes and water bills.

***Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? (Verse 33)***

You can't bring a charge against the elect because all charges against the elect have been dismissed. God charged Christ for our sins who discharged them by his death and shed blood.

***Who is he that condemneth? (Verse 34)***

In this verse is found four reasons why the elect cannot be condemned. The death of Christ satisfied all of God's just demands against their sins. The resurrection of Christ is the proof that God was satisfied with the payment Christ made. The presence of Christ in heaven is the everlasting reminder of the security of the elect for the elect are seated with him and to condemn them is to condemn him. The intercession of Christ secures the elect, for he ever liveth to defend and protect the elect from every attack made against them. (Heb.7:25)

***Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Verse 35)***

When God foreknew, predestinated, called, and justified us we were dead in trespasses and sins. If God did all those things for us when we were dead in sin, is there anything that can separate us from his love now that we are justified? If God loved us when we dead in sins, how can anything separate us from the love of God now that we are justified?

Romans 8 is one of the most blessed chapters in the Bible and Romans 8:28 is one of the most blessed verses for the Christian. It assures us when

we are in doubt. It comforts us when we are in pain. It gives us hope when we give up hope. It encourages us when we are discouraged. It wipes the tears from our eyes. It puts joy back into our heart.

Memorize it and hide it in your heart because you will need it time and time again in your walk with the Lord. Thank God for the promise of Romans 8:28!