

Preached on 4/16/23 at GBC - Ruston

"The PURPOSE Of God, Pt.2"

Romans 8:29-30

Here's what I want us to prayerfully consider today as we pickup this study of this wonderful promise to God's elect – **HOW** can we have **CONFIDENCE** that "*all things work together for good*" when to our human mind for the most part it all **APPEARS** to be **CHAOS**? **Think about it in this light**: The original Greek word translated "*good*" means 'that which is truly a gift'. Paul told these same Roman believers in **Rom.6:23** – "*For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" So "we know that all things work together for that which is truly **a gift**", meaning "**ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.**" Most confuse all things working together for good to apply to all the things of time and sense, but that's just not the case for God's children while in the present world. Noah endured the terrors that surrounded God's destructive wrath of mankind by the flood, yet for him, "*all things worked together for good.*" The same can be said of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and **JOSEPH**. It is also true for every object of God's eternal love. I can't help but think about the **THIEF ON THE CROSS**. Outwardly, to the eyes of the flesh, concerning the things of time and sense, all things didn't appear to be working together for his physical good. **BUT**, concerning "*the gift of God ETERNAL LIFE through Jesus Christ our Lord*", all things fell perfectly into place, **DIDN'T THEY?** The children of God have absolutely **NO PROMISE** from God that we'll always be wealthy, always be healthy, and always be loved by everybody. Matter of fact, the exact opposite is promised to all God's children – "*In the WORLD ye shall have tribulation.*" (**Jn.16:33**) **But keep this in your mind**: "*the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*" (**Rom.14:17**); "*Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God [is] a consuming fire.*" (**Heb.12:28,29**) As far as everything that is truly working together for the eternal good of God's children, Paul said confidently, "**FOR WE KNOW**". How could he be so confident; **HOW CAN WE BE AS CONFIDENT** – "*according to HIS PURPOSE.*"

This brings us to the Scriptural ground of such confidence for the children of God based on this "*purpose*" of the sovereign, triune God. How can we know "**HIS PURPOSE**" will always work together for our eternal good? Let's read our text – "*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.*" "**HIS PURPOSE**" isn't left up to chance or man's free will (**which is a myth anyhow**). While the words of these two verses perplex and strike fear into the heart of religious people, so much so that they avoid them, ignore them, or twist them, to those "*born of God*", they present an **UNBREAKABLE CHAIN** of God's purpose and power to save every object of His love. If you'll pay careful attention, all of these **ACTS** that "*work together for good*", **i.e., for the salvation of God's elect**, are the **ACTS OF GOD**, and each one of them are recorded in the **PAST TENSE** – "**HE DID foreknow**"; "**HE ALSO DID predestinate**"; "**whom HE CALLED**"; "**he also JUSTIFIED**"; "**he also GLORIFIED**". I want us to consider each one of them separately.

First of all – "*For whom He did foreknow*". Notice, it says "*for WHOM*", not **for what** "*He did foreknow*." I know that those who are unregenerate "wrestle" words like these to their own destruction. Most of them will say of these words: "This means that God looked down through

time and SAW what men and women would do, and then based on His foreknowledge of their actions, He would either choose the one or reject the other.” There is so much wrong with this argument that time won’t permit me to deal with every aspect of such heresy. I’ll just give you a couple passages that **DISPROVE** their whole argument – “*For this [is] the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son. And not only [this]; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, [even] by our father Isaac; (For [the children] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)* It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”(Rom.9:9-13); “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were **ordained to eternal life believed.**”(Acts 13:48) If the word “**foreknow**” **does not mean** that God looked down through time, saw what men do, then established His will and purpose based on this gained knowledge, **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?** The **Greek** word translated “**foreknow**” is a combination of two words, the first part of the word meaning ‘before’, and the second part of the word meaning ‘to know or to be acquainted with’. It is actually a Jewish idiom for the intimate relationship between a man and a woman – “*Adam KNEW Eve is wife, and she conceived, and bore him a son.*” **The word means ‘to love’!** When the Apostle wrote under inspiration of the Holy Spirit – “*For whom He did foreknow*”, he declared dogmatically - “**For WHOM He did BEFORE LOVE.**” **Jeremiah stated it this way:** “*The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, [saying], Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*”(Jer.31:3) Think back to that passage in **Rom.9:13** – “*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*” **Listen to Christ’s description of this eternal love** – “*I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*”(Jn.17:23,24) This **FORE LOVE** of God has it’s foundation in Christ’s work as His people’s Surety and Redeemer – “*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins.*”(I Jn.4:10) Because of His eternal love of His elect, those chosen in Christ, God sent His Son into this world to **SATISFY** and **RECONCILE** them to Himself.

Secondly – “*He also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*” The Greek word translated “**predestinate**” means ‘to foreordain, predetermine, or appoint beforehand’. The Apostle makes a distinction between “foreknowledge” and “predestination”. The one (**foreknowledge**) has to do with God’s choice of persons (**His elect**), while the other (**predestination**) has to do with the destination or end of those He chose. These words tell us dogmatically that **ALL THOSE GOD “foreknew” (meaning He loved before time)**, He has determined that they will be “**conformed to the image of His Son.**” The word translated “**conformed**” means ‘having the same form as another’. The word translated “**image**” means ‘likeness’. All those God foreloved will ultimately be in the likeness or image of His Son, seeing they are presently adopted sons and daughters of the living God. I can remember people (**myself included**) beating ourselves and others to death with this verse over outward character and conduct. That’s not the point of the Holy Spirit’s teaching by Paul. It has everything to do with what all God’s elect children will become when Christ returns – “*Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*”(Phil.3:21) Listen to another Apostle – “*Behold,*

what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”(I Jn.3:1,2) “All things work together for GOOD to them that love God, to them that are the called according to HIS PURPOSE.” It is God’s will and purpose that every object of His love will be **LIKE HIS BELOVED SON**.

THIRDLY – “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also **CALLED**.” I’ve always told you how important words are when it comes to understanding the Scriptures. Paul had used the word “called” in Vs.28 – “to them who are the **CALLED** according to His purpose.” The word translated “called” in that verse means ‘Divinely selected or appointed.’ **Paul used a different word in this verse.** The word “called” in this passage means ‘to call with a loud voice’. Christ used the same word in **Jn.10:3** – “To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he **calleth** his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.” By this calling, Paul is talking about much more than just the external call of the Word of God. Many **HEAR** the words of the Gospel, even giving mental agreement to many of the truths declared by them, yet they are unregenerate and in unbelief. This is talking about the **effectual call** of God the Holy Spirit through the preached word of God, which always results in their calling on the “name of the Lord” – “Who hath saved us, **and called** [us] **with an holy calling**, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”(II Tim.1:9)

FOURTHLY – “and whom he called, them he also justified.” All those whom the Father loved before time as they were chosen in Christ; all those He preordained or determined for them to be made like unto His son; all those He called by His Gospel through the power of His Holy Spirit, “them He also **DECLARED RIGHTEOUS**.” **Job asked the most important question of all:** “Then Job answered and said, I know [it is] **so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?**”(Job 9:1,2) The Hebrew word translated “be just” means ‘to declare righteous’. So Job asked “How should man be declared righteous with God?” **That is the question of the ages!** But according to God’s “**PURPOSE**”, He foreloved, predestinated, and called every object of His love by His Gospel to justification, i.e., to be declared the righteousness of God, through and by His glorious Son, the Lord Jesus Christ’s obedience unto death – “Be it known unto you therefore, men [and] brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe **are justified** from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”(Acts 13:38,39) This declaration of righteousness on the guilty sinner is not conditioned on the sinner’s faith, repentance, obedience, or perseverance, but on God’s faithfulness to Himself as both “**a just God and a Savior**.” God can **only justify** or **DECLARE SINNERS RIGHTEOUS** based on that which glorifies and honors **HIMSELF** as “**a just God and a Savior**” and that was accomplished by Christ’s obedience unto death – “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”(Rom.5:8,9) **Listen closely:** All those God foreloved, predestinated, and call will **IN TIME** be called to justification and eternal life, evidenced by their calling on Christ alone as “**the Lord OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**.”

FIFTH and FINALLY – “and whom he justified, them he also **glorified**.” The Greek word translated “glorified” means ‘to impart glory to something, render it excellent’. Just like every other work in God’s work of salvation, God speaks of this work as completed, even though for the

past several millennia all of His redeemed, justified saints have died and been buried. How can God speak so definitely concerning the glorification of His elect? Because the entire **PURPOSE** of God's redemptive work rested on the **PERSON** and **WORK** of Christ. All of these acts point to Christ, His blood, His righteousness, His obedience unto death. And as Christ was raised from the dead, all those He represented as their Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer will be glorified like their Lord. **Listen to Christ's words in His prayer as our Great High Priest** – *“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”*(**John 17:24**) **Listen to me:** The glory of God depends on the actual fulfillment in time of the salvation and glorification of all those He purposed to save through Christ's obedience unto death. What Paul is talking about here is **ETERNAL GLORY**, that to which all God elect are predestinated and called unto; and which their justification gives them right and title to as adopted sons and daughters of God. This eternal glory will consist in a likeness to Christ, communion with him, an everlasting vision of him, freedom from all that is evil, and an enjoyment of all that is good.

This is God **PURPOSE** of salvation, and this gives the children of God comfort and encouragement in light of all our friends, family, and foes who appear to be “without God in this world”. If they are His by election, He has predestinated that they too will be the recipients of these same eternal blessings He has so freely bestowed on us. And the means by which He is pleased to call them to true faith and true repentance is by the declaration of this glorious purpose of grace in Christ **ALONE**.