

CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE

ROMANS 8:28-30 • TV087A

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Romans 8:28-30

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 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.”

I want you to take your Bible and open it with me to the **book of Romans**. I’m going to read for my text a very familiar passage of Scripture found in **Romans chapter 8:28**.

Now, let’s go to school today. Let’s see what we can find out about God’s covenant and God’s purpose and God’s love. This is a very familiar passage of Scripture. You hear it quoted again and again, but I believe that the Holy Spirit will be our teacher and we can learn something about this verse, perhaps, that we haven’t learned before.

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Now, let me read it with you; that's **Romans chapter 8:28-30**. We must not stop at **verse 28** but read the next two verses along with this most familiar passage of Scripture. It says in **Romans 8:28-30**: *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he, (that is Christ) might be the first born 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.”*

Now, the nation of Israel belonged to the Lord. They were called the *“people of God.”* They were not always faithful. They turned to other gods. They worshipped idols. They did not always do those things that were well pleasing in the sight of God.

Even the choice men of Israel such as Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon; these choice men of Israel, vexed the Holy God and grieved the Spirit of the Lord God. But they were the people of God. They were the chosen people of God. The nation of Israel had the blessings of God upon it and they were called *“a special people unto the Lord God.”*

And the Lord God continually reminded Israel that He would keep His covenant, He would keep His promises, He would fulfill His purposes respecting Israel, and they would enjoy His presence and partake of His blessings, not because of their faithfulness but because of His faithfulness, not because of their love for Him, but because of His love for them.

Listen to these Scriptures and these ought to be marked in your Bible if you have an interest in Israel, if you have an interest in the Old Testament and the dealings of God with the nation Israel.

And national Israel is a type of spiritual Israel. And we read in **Deuteronomy chapter 7:6-8**; now listen to this: *“For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God.”* And God is speaking here to Israel. *“The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself above all people that are on the face of the earth.”*

Now listen: *“The Lord did not set his love upon you nor choose you because you were more in number than any people, you were the fewest of all people but because the Lord loved you and because God would keep the oath which he has sworn to your fathers.”*

In other words, God's blessings upon Israel and God's mercies upon Israel were not because of their love for Him but because of His love for them, not because of their faithfulness but because of His faithfulness. The Lord set His love upon them and chose them and determined to bless them because of his purpose and because of His promise.

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And He said over in **Malachi chapter 3**: *“I am the Lord; I change not.”*

God does not change in His decrees. He does not change in His purposes. He said: *“I am the Lord; I change not, therefore, ye sons of Jacob, (ye people of Israel) are not consumed.”* It is because God does not change.

Now, who are we? We are not national Israel; we are spiritual Israel. And as spiritual Israel we are the people of God in Christ Jesus, not a national people, *“but a holy nation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood, a special people and sons of God.”*

Not through a covenant that God made with Abraham but through an everlasting covenant, an eternal covenant which God made with Himself, which He purposed in Himself, *“which he purposed in Christ before the world began.”*

Now, God does not dwell among us as He did among Israel in a tabernacle but God dwells in our hearts, in the person of the Holy Spirit. Back in the wilderness God dwelt with Israel in a tabernacle. In the Holy of Holies God manifested His presence and there the people went to meet God and where God met with the people, and where the sacrifices were offered. But God does not dwell among spiritual Israel in a tabernacle made with hands but He dwells in our hearts by His Spirit. And He said: *“If any man has not the spirit of God he is none of his.”*

And then God has not written His law on tables of stone and given them to us as He did to Israel but God has written His commandments in our hearts and His commandments the prophet said, *“Are not grievous.”*

We wait not for an earthly high priest to go into the Holy of Holies made with hands with the sacrifice every morning and every evening, and once a year as a great atonement. But our great high priest the Lord Jesus Christ has gone, yea, into the very presence of God with His own blood to make an effectual atonement, a once for all atonement, and to sanctify forever with the perfect sacrifice those who believe.

We do not serve God as Israel did in a spirit of bondage and fear *“but his love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit”* and we can say Lord; *“You know all things, you know that we love you.”*

Yes, the presence of God rests upon spiritual Israel and God has promised His mercies and His grace. God has promised His love. God has promised to us eternal glory. But now, you listen:

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the motivating cause of God's mercy to spiritual Israel, just like the national Israel, is not because of our love for Him but it's because of His love for us.

Now, listen to this Scripture in **1 John 4:10**: *"Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and gave his son to be the propitiation for our sins,"* the motivating cause. We do love God. God dwells in our hearts by His Spirit.

We cry, *"Father, Father,"* but we do not serve Him in bondage nor in fear but in sonship. And we know that our great high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, has gone into the Holy of Holies and He has sanctified, perfected forever, all them that believe.

And God will show mercy and grace to all them who love Him. *"All things work together for good to them that love God and to them who are the called according to his purpose"* and they are one in the same. Those who love God and those who are called according to His purpose are one in the same.

But the motivating cause of God's mercy is not our love for Him but His love for us. Listen to **Romans 5:8**: *"But God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."*

In other words, we love God because He first loved us. We choose God because He chose us. We seek God because He sought us. We call upon God because He called us. His love preceded our love. His purpose preceded our reception of Him. His covenant of grace concerning us preceded our repentance and our faith.

So the motivating cause of God's mercies and God's grace is not our love for Him; it's His love for us. That's what he says in **Ephesians 2:4 and 5**: *"But God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in sin hath quickened us together with Christ."*

The believer does serve God. He not only loves God but he serves God. But the motivating cause of God's mercy is not our service and not our works and not even our faithfulness but His purpose and grace which was commended to us and given to us in Christ before the world began.

Listen to this Scripture in **2 Timothy 1:9**: *"He hath saved us and called us with a holy calling not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ before the world began."*

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What I'm trying to say to you is this; that part of **Romans 28** which is quoted all the time, "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God;*" the second part of that is equally important or more important than the first part, "*and to them who are the called according to his purpose.*"

Almighty God's mercies to Israel were not because of their love but His love, not because of their faithfulness but His faithfulness. And the motivating cause of God's mercy and God's love to you and to me is preceded; by His love and is preceded by His purpose.

And the motivating cause is not our love. God doesn't bless us because we love Him. He blesses us because He loves us and we love Him because He loves us. God doesn't bless us and show mercy unto us because we serve Him; He shows mercy to us and blesses us because He chose to do so. He found the cause in Himself and not in us. Now that's true!

Now, let's look at this verse carefully and read all the way through. Let's just don't take bits and pieces of it and depend upon our thoughts and our own ideas about it; let's see what God says.

Now let's look at it carefully, **Romans 8:28**: "*And we know,*" this is what we know and we are convinced of this, "*That all things work together for good to them who love God, who are the called according to his purpose.*"

Now, let's just take it a little bit at a time, first of all, "*all things.*" What are we talking about here, "*all things work together for good, all things.*" God the Father in His promises, in His purpose and in His providence; works "*all things.*"

God the Son as Prophet, Priest, and King, "*all things,*" God the Holy Spirit as the quickener, as the comforter, and as the teacher, "*all things*" in heaven, even angels because they are sent as ministering spirits to those who shall be the heirs of salvation.

"*All things,*" not only good angels but evil angels, not only great things but small things, not only good things but bad things, "*all things,*" not some things but "*all things.*"

All events such as peace and war, all events such as famine and plenty, all events such as sickness and health, sorrow and happiness, loss and gain, even life or death, "*all things.*"

There's nothing that happens in me or unto me or about me or involving me as a son of God, as a child of promise, as a holy nation, as a peculiar people, as a special person unto God; "*all things work together for my good.*"

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Now, what do we mean by “*work together for good?*” Well, we are not talking about temporal good. We are not talking about earthly good; we are talking about eternal good. We are talking about everything in heaven and earth and under the earth.

All things work together in one plan, in one purpose, laid out by a Sovereign God Himself who works these things together for our eternal good, for our eternal glory, and for the eternal happiness of His people.

Now we put too much stock on the things of this earth. This flesh is not our final hope. This world is not our final home. God is working all things together for our everlasting good, for His eternal glory and for our everlasting happiness.

The song writer said:

**“Judge not the Lord by feeble sense (that is fleshly sense)
But trust Him for His grace
Behind the frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.”**

All things, everything in heaven, earth, and under the earth, all things, all angels good and bad, all events, peace and war, all things, tragedies or successes, life or death, sickness, sorrow, whatever it may be is being worked together by a Sovereign God for the everlasting good, for the eternal good of His people, those who love Him.

Now, we do not love God as much as we should. Nobody listening to me would possibly say “I love God as much as I should” because the Scripture says: “*We are to love God with all our hearts, mind, soul, and strength.*”

And we don’t love God as much as we’d like to, do we? And we don’t love God as much as we hope to and expect to someday. But by his grace we can say this: “We do love him.” Why do we love him? Are we different from those who hate him? “*The natural mind is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be.*”

I’ll tell you why we love Him; the Scripture tells us and we can’t take any credit for it or any praise for it; “*we love God because he first loved us.*” That’s the foundation of our love. We didn’t love God; He loved us long before we were born.

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The Lord said to Jeremiah; *“Before I formed thee in the belly, before you came out of the womb; I sanctified you; I set you apart. I set my love upon you. I made you an object of my affection before you were ever born.”*

The apostle Paul said in **Galatians 1:15**: *“God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me.”* Paul hated Jesus Christ until he was a man almost 40 years of age. He despised His name and the Gospel and the message and the hope of Jesus Christ.

But he finally gave his life for Christ. He loved Christ, why? It’s because Christ loved Him, because He was an object of the Lord’s affection. So, we can say, we do love God and *“all things work together for good to them who (do) love God.”*

We do choose God but God chose us. We do seek God. David said; *“As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee the living God.”* We do call upon God but because He called upon us. And we do continue in faith but it’s because by His grace He keeps us in His faith.

Now watch this: *“All things, (and we’ve defined that) work together (in one great plan, in one great purpose, designed, and purposed, and planned, by a wise, and holy and Sovereign God), work together for good (for the eternal good of everybody who loves God), and who are called according to his purpose.”*

Now, God has a purpose and that purpose is as old as creation, it’s even older than creation. It says in **Ephesians 1:9**, *“That he purposed it in himself.”*

Back before the world was made, back before man was put in the Garden, back before the morning stars sang together, back before the sons of God shouted for joy, back before the angels were ever created, God purposed in Himself.

And it says in **Ephesians 3:11**: *“He purposed it in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* He purposed; what did He purpose? He purposed to have a people. He purposed to populate heaven with a people just like His Son.

His purpose preceded His love, His purpose to bless us and to call us and to reveal Himself to us preceded the expression of His love to us. *“We are called according to his purpose, (not according to our designs, and not according to our wishes and plans) but according to his purpose which he purposed in himself, which he purposed in Christ before the world began.”*

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Now, if you will notice **verse 29** begins with the three letter word “*f-o-r*.” We just read **Romans 8:28** which is so familiar; everybody can quote it. “*And we know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*”

But this does not stand alone; it requires the next two verses; the next verse begins with “*for*,” “*For whom he did foreknow.*” Now, this verse has to go with **verse 28** because it begins with the word “*For all things work together for good to them who love God who are the called according to his purpose*” (for or because).”

Why does all things work, why do all things work together for our good, whom God loves, and whom He calls, because He foreknew us; that’s the first thing; “*for he foreknew them.*”

What does it mean He foreknew them? Well, it means just this, He knew them before. A lot of people say that word is the word foreordained. That’s alright too. God ordains what He knows and He knows what He ordained.

Christ said: “*I know my sheep, and am known of mine.*” He always has known them. This is a personal, intimate, love-relationship, between Christ and His sheep. “*I know my sheep.*”

Now, you remember in **Matthew 7:22 and 23**; something like this is said at the Judgment. Christ speaking to some people said: “*I never knew you.*” Now, what does He mean by that, “*I never knew you?*”

Well, He knew their birth. He knew their lives. He knew their thoughts. He knew the day of their deaths. He knew their rebellion. He knew all these things. He knows those things about every man.

But this word “*know*” here is a love; “*I never loved you,*” with a complacent love, with a genuine love, with an intimate love, with an everlasting love.

He says: “*All things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose*” because He knows them. He has always known them. He has foreknown them. He has known them before: “*Having loved his own he loved them to the end.*”

Our God draws us with an everlasting love which knows no end and it knows no beginning. That’s what that verse is saying. All things are working together for our good because God knows us and loves us and has set His affection upon us.

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And that love is an everlasting love. It's an infinite love. It's an unchangeable love. It is a perfect love.

Now watch the next line: "*For whom he foreknew, (foreknew before), he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son.*" Now, this is God's eternal purpose which He purposed in Himself, which He purposed in Christ, which He purposed before the world began that He might populate heaven with a people just like His Son.

"Whom he foreknew he predestinated (predetermined and that's the word; He predetermined, He determined beforehand that every one of them should be just like Christ)."

Now, there was a book put out years ago on "**The Design of God in Redemption**" and it listed several things about God's design in redemption.

First of all: God plans in redemption to put an end to all things contrary to Himself!

He's going to put an end to satanic power, satanic rule and evil and "*the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, (darkness, and all of these things).*" God's going to put an end to everything contrary to Himself.

Secondly: God is going to restore all things that were ruined in the fall, everything, even in nature, even the animals.

God is going to restore the earth. "*There's going to be a new heaven and a new earth.*" The Scripture teaches in **Romans 8** "*that all creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*"

When God reveals the glory of His people He's going to make a new earth. He's going to restore everything ruined in the fall.

Thirdly: He's going to glorify Himself!

He's going to give preeminence to His son. Jesus Christ shall have preeminence. "*Every knee's going to bow in heaven, earth, and hell. And every tongue is going to confess that he's Lord to the glory of God the father.*"

Fourthly: God's chief end in redemption is to have a people like Christ!

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He has predestinated that everyone whom He hath chosen; everyone whom He hath foreknown, every person redeemed by the blood of Christ is going to be just like the Lord Jesus Christ.

We shall see Him and we shall be just like Him. Now notice the next line: *“All things, (everything in eternity past, present, and future, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), all things (good and bad, all events, everything) is working together for good, (for the eternal good, for the eternal glory and happiness of those who love Him), who are the called according to his purpose for he foreknew them.”*

He knew them before. He set them apart. He sanctified them. He set His love upon them and He made them the objects of His grace, just like he did national Israel. Among all the nations God didn't bless the Amorites, the Amalekites, the Hittites, and the Philistines.

He blessed Israel. They were a special people not because of their love, not because of their faithfulness, because of His faithfulness and His purpose and His love for them. *“I am the Lord; I change not. Therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed.”*

And God foreknew a people and He predetermined that every one of them would be like Christ. *“And whom he predestinated; (look at that next line), he called; (that's what it says), he called.”*

Now men do not love God by nature. Men hate God by nature. *“We love darkness rather than light.”* Men will not come to God by nature. Christ said, *“No man can come to me, except my Father which sent me draw him.”*

Men will not seek God: *“There's none that seeketh after God.”* They must be called of God. They must be born of God. They must be quickened of God. They must be convicted of sin. They must be called of faith.

That's what Paul said: *“God who separated me from my mother's womb called me by his Spirit.”* God called him. Every one whom He knew before, whom He predetermined to make like His son; in time, by His Spirit and by His power, called them.

And not only that; *“but whom he called he justified.”* What does it mean *“he justified?”* Well, God is love, but God is just. God almighty is merciful but God almighty is righteous and His holy law must be honored and His justice must be satisfied.

And that's why Christ came into this world to justify us. He came down here and faced the law and obeyed it that we might have a perfect righteousness. He came down here in the flesh and

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died under the guilt of our sins that He might satisfy the justice of God and enable a holy God to be just and justify the ungodly.

So, He justified us. He didn't do it by hook or crook; He did it by sacrifice. He didn't do it by erasing sins; He did it by atoning for sin. He didn't do it by turning His face away from their sins; but He did it by punishing their sins in the person of His Son. He justified all whom He foreknew and all whom He called.

And now watch the last line: *“And whom he justified he glorified.”* Eternal glories meant here, not glory on this earth; there's no glory here. This is a place of sin, darkness, death, and evil. But He glorified them in His purpose, in His mind, and one of these days in His presence.

And that takes us right back to the beginning. *“All things work together for the good, (the eternal good and eternal glory) of them who love God, who are the called according to his purpose.”*

For this thing started back yonder in the counsel halls of eternity and it will be culminated in the presence of the living God when we are brought forth from the grave in the image of Christ!